YURI TRIFONOV

THE IMPATIENT ONES

PROGRESS PUBLISHERS
MOSCOW

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The gifted Soviet writer Yuri Trifonov, a State Prize winner, is well known for two novels *The Quenching of the Thirst* and *Students,* a trilogy of novellas *The Exchange, A Preliminary Summing Up* and *The Long Goodbye,* and numerous short stories.

He has long been interested in historical subjects. His *Reflection from a Fire* (1966) looked back at the revolutionary past and his most recent historical novel *The Impatient Ones* (1972) tells the story of the legendary Andrei Zhelyabov (1850-1881), one of the leaders of the People's Will movement, and his comrades. "They displayed the greatest self-sacrifice," Lenin said of the members of the People's Will, "and ... astonished the world. Undoubtedly these sacrifices were not in vain; undoubtedly they promoted, directly or indirectly, the subsequent revolutionary education of the Russian people."

In a preface to the novel the well-known Soviet literary critic Alexander Svobodin describes the author's life and work.

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Translated from the Russian by *Robert Daglish*
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Юрий Трифонов
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A FEELING OF TIME

Yuri Trifonov belongs to the generation of the fifty-year-olds in Soviet literature. This is true of himself—he was born in 1925—and even more of his characters, or rather of the attitude to the world that permeates all his writing. In the course of his literary career his inner world and consequently his writing have undergone changes that may seem paradoxical to the uninitiated. They are indeed paradoxical, but no more so than the age in which he has lived and worked. After an easy beginning he has arrived at a poignant awareness of time, of its passage through each of us.

Thomas Mann wrote of the peculiar duality of the element we call time. It is stationary and yet it flows. We are with those who were before us, and yet we are separated from them. In Trifonov's second novel, *The Quenching of the Thirst,* which appeared in 1963, the character who tells the story confesses, "I went on sitting there, enjoying the solitude. My fears had abated, hidden themselves somewhere in the depths of my being. I have known such attacks before. I believe they are caused by time. Usually we are unaware of time; it passes through us without our noticing it, but sometimes it catches on something inside and we experience a moment of terror, as if in the face of approaching death. But it passes off, like an attack of asthma...."

One cannot be an artist without sensing this duality, without sometimes experiencing the attacks of this noble sickness.

It is instructive to trace how this feeling for the past accumulated in the author of *The Impatient Ones,* a feeling that brought him to an understanding of history as a part of his own "self", that has given a new dimension to his inner world, a new appreciation of "life" and "death" as philosophical categories.

His background had a lot to do with this.

Trifonov comes from a family of revolutionaries, revolution-

aries of a generation that was a concentrated charge of historical energy. His father entered the struggle in the 1900s, he was one of those who were later to be called the Lenin Guard, a name that in my view fails just as much to convey the spirit of that generation as does the term "party functionary", so often used in the West. Lenin did not have guardsmen, his associates were people who shared his views. They were remarkable for their ability to work all round the clock, and for their firm belief that no matter what small job they were called upon to do they would be working for the complete reorganisation of Russia and later, or perhaps simultaneously, of all mankind, on socialist principles. They had the feeling, which we can only envy, that they were seeing history in the making.

Trifonov told us about these people in his documentary *Reflection from a Fire,* published in 1966. The book is about his father, from the beginning of his conscious life to the end of the Civil War.

With *Reflection from a Fire* we are on the near approaches to *The Impatient Ones.* Scrupulously, almost pedantically it reconstructs the biography of a man who undertook any work for the cause with the same wholeheartedness, whether as a rank-and-file soldier, a commander in the field, a member of the Revolutionary Military Council on various fronts, or a representative of the High Command of the Red Army.

Trifonov avoids anything that cannot be thoroughly documented, he dislikes romantic colours and is deliberately unemotional. And yet *Reflection from a Fire* is one of the finest and most highly emotional books ever written about the revolution and Civil War in Russia.

But if this had been merely the work of the son of a hero who had come into the possession of certain documents and wished to do his duty by his father, the book might still have been interesting but would probably not have become a significant literary and social phenomenon. In fact, it was written by a member of a generation that had endured historical trials, that had suffered the heaviest casualties in the war against fascism, one of the most complex of Soviet generations, whose intellectual life has been exceptionally intense. Every line in Trifonov's first historical work is charged with this tension. Energetically and with a sense of undeniable moral duty he reconstructs the everyday life of a professional revolutionary. In this he shows himself to be a keen and exacting historian,

eager for documentary proof and exact in his descriptions. He shows a taste for listing details that in the end add up to a very broad picture.

But the groundwork of facts is dominated by the moral theme. Its ethic is the protest of the oppressed spirit, as it revealed itself in the struggle of the Russian revolutionaries who were becoming intellectuals in the fight for political, economic and spiritual freedom, for human dignity.

Reflection from a Fire took an approach to Russian history that is characteristic of the author of *The Impatient Ones*. It also uses an artistic device that was to be further developed in the larger novel.

The book is held together by the diary (a genuine one) of a sixteen-year-old schoolboy who is drawn into the revolution and swept along in its mighty current. Like the good pupil he once was, the boy keeps his diary neatly, noting down only the facts: we arrived ..., we left ..., I went to such and such a place, where I met so and so. These notes show us in terms of everyday life something that we people of today have come to regard as an Odyssey. But strangely enough, it is these notes that bring the period that the book describes closer to our own day.

In *The Impatient Ones* there are chapters united by the name of Clio, the Muse of history. They, too, run through the whole book and they, too, provide the same kind of factual information—what happened later, what became of this or that person.

In fateful battle we face the foe,
Fates unknown await us yet...

It was not for nothing that Trifonov chose these lines from a famous revolutionary song as the epigraph for his *Reflection from a Fire.*

In his first novel *Students,* however, there was little sign of the Trifonov of today searching, analytical, prepared to tear away any and every veil. Published in 1950, this novel was written in the conventional style of those days. The short novels he has produced in the 1970s—*The Exchange, The Long Goodbye, A Preliminary Summing Up,* have become

an essential element in the intellectual life of any serious reader.

In these novels Trifonov clearly and accurately expresses the movement of the consciousness and the accumulated experience of his generation; his works are a positive and purposeful testimony to the past two decades. His characteristically historical way of thinking, a rare and valuable quality, came to him while writing about contemporary life. It was here that he fully evolved the ability to express in three dimensions the stream, the trend and feeling of the time, that I have already mentioned.

His evolution was clearly reflected in *The Quenching of the Thirst*. It is in this book that the Trifonov we know today emerges.

The scene of this second novel is Turkmenia, the construction site of a great canal across the Kara-Kum desert. Central Asia was the testing range for Trifonov's present attitude to the world. Both the novel and the stories he wrote in this period are crowded with characters. Here we meet geologists, doctors, engineers, journalists, drivers, excavator operators, Turkmenian herdsmen and administrators. Desert, water, people—everything is on the move. He looks closely at the general movement that characterised the country in those years and, pondering on the reason for his people's confident determination in the struggle with the eternal aggression of the desert, attributes it to awareness of their historical experience.

Trifonov's view of the people engaged in recalling the desert to civilisation is that of an intellectual, a man from the metropolis. He makes no attempt to conceal this; on the contrary he emphasises it. He is an exponent of what might be called "urban prose", although no such term has yet been introduced in our critical literature. He is a Muscovite, a writer of the city and for the city. In his recent stories he finds a poignant lyricism in the Moscow suburbs, the old summer cottages, the pine-trees in their gardens, the tennis courts where people play for amusement only, the flat-bottomed boats on the rivers, the time-greyed fences, the road from the trolleybus stop to the cottages, the trolleybus terminal in the rain....

These are the outer suburbs, not the suburbs proper. They give the writer a better vantage point for viewing the townspeople. In the dim light filtering through those old lampshades one often catches a glimpse of the most essential things in

Trifonov's characters. Like a modern Chekhov, Trifonov exposes the life of the suburbs to a ruthless yet loving scrutiny.

He scrupulously records the changing times, weaving what is disappearing and what has already disappeared into his narrative. To recall such things is to recall the eternal value of life and as they grow more mature his characters with their yearning for self-knowledge do this more and more often.

"One day, decades later, I went there again and climbed a low hill to see the place where so much of what afterwards became my life began."

The author and his characters study the past not merely to quench some deep spiritual thirst, but to understand the realities that made them what they are, and not only them but the whole life of the country as it is now. Their pursuit of self-knowledge is both natural and optimistic. The past becomes an instrument of moral improvement in the present. Evidently this is due to the fact that Trifonov's writing is permeated with a general notion of morality that springs not only from the ideals of the revolutionary generation, but also from classical Russian literature, from the democratic and humane Russian thought of the 19th century.

When writing about present-day intellectuals, Trifonov seldom misses the chance of bringing people of the revolutionary generation into his story. He is still utterly fascinated by them, they have a magnetic attraction for him.

In *The Exchange* we are introduced to the central character's grandfather. In his youth he had been "involved in revolutionary activities, was put in prison, exiled, escaped abroad, worked in Switzerland, in Belgium, had known Vera Zasulich". Here we meet somebody directly connected with the generation of *The Impatient Ones*, the generation of that renowned woman of the Russian liberation movement. (In January 1878, Zasulich was received by the Petersburg Chief of Police, drew a revolver that she had kept concealed in her muff and shot him to avenge the brutal flogging in prison of a student she did not know and had never met. The shot came as a signal for the young revolutionaries to fight the brutality and abuse of justice practised by the government of the Russian Emperor).

When the grandfather is buried, the narrator's searching gaze turns to those of his generation who are still alive.... "One old woman, very stooped and with a little wizened half-blind

face turned up.... In the past she had been a desperately daring revolutionary, a terrorist. She had thrown a bomb at somebody...."

The author picks these people out of the run of everyday life, moulds them out of the memories of his youth with perhaps a touch of regret that he did not look more closely at them when he had the chance. "Your whole life flows before you in disjointed scenes, mere fragments, you gaze at them insatiably, you can never have enough, you keep wanting to remember more and more and you seem to get intoxicated. For there is no stronger wine in the world than what we call 'memory'," says a Spanish veteran in one of Trifonov's short stories.

This was how Trifonov came to write *The Impatient Ones*.

The Impatient Ones is a novel about the Russian liberation movement in the 1870s and the early 1880s. Its focal point is the Russian terrorist leader Andrei Zhelyabov, but the scope of the novel is wide.

It was an astonishing period. A mere handful of revolutionaries, less than forty all told, succeeded in shaking the Russian Empire to its foundations. It took on the gigantic repressive apparatus of Russian tsarism and there was a moment when the whole pyramid of state was seized with something like panic. And yet, even according to its own calculations, the People's Will party, the main party in the struggle, would have been able to muster only about five hundred young people in the event of the battle being taken into the streets.

In the language of contemporary politics, the novel treats of Russian extremism of the end of the last century. But the main interest in the whole movement, the meaning and significance of its tragic outcome, is not in extremism at all. Nor does it lie in the gripping story of the conspiratorial life, the intricate building up of the secret organisation, the use of bombs, the political killings. The tragic dialectic of the People's Will movement rules out any analogy between this movement and those of the "Right" or "Left" extremism of the present day Even the term extremism itself does not express the true significance of the movement.

Its significance lies in something else.

The legendary People's Will party, which still grips the imagination of succeeding generations, was a brief but vivid

episode in the Russian revolutionary movement of the seventies and eighties of the last century. It was the apogee and finale of that movement. It can only be understood in its evolution from its very beginning to its tragic end by considering Russian life during the whole period, the whole movement, all its hypostases.

Nicholas I died (there is good reason to believe that he committeed suicide) in 1855, after his defeat in the Crimean War at the hands of Britain, France and Turkey. Imperial Russia had revealed its economic, technical and political backwardness. The Colossus, it turned out, had feet of clay.

With the death of the tsar the thirty-year silence imposed by his dictatorship was broken. Thinking Russia raised its voice. The reasons for the defeat were debated in all sections of society, from the palace to the student eating-houses. The root of the evil, the focus of all other causes, it appeared, was the slavery of the peasants, who were the main producing class. Serfdom, like a cancerous growth in the feudal body, was blocking the vital currents of Russian life.

In 1861, the new Emperor, Alexander II, was compelled to abolish serfdom and grant the peasants freedom, but only on the conditions that they should buy the portions of land to which they were entitled from the former owners.

One did not have to be a political prophet to predict discontent and unrest among the peasants, who realised that this obligatory purchase would involve them in a new kind of bondage, the bondage of hard cash with all the delights of the debtors' prison, high interest rates, distraining of property, and so on.

There were more reforms to come—administrative reforms in the rural districts and in the towns; judicial (trial by jury was introduced), military reform—the twenty-five years' compulsory military service, the curse of the peasant's life, was at last abolished—and it began to look as if Russia could embark on a typically Western road of capitalist development.

But already in the early sixties, as had always happened in tsarist Russia, the government, frightened by its own reforming zeal that had generated forms of social movement that tsarism was not used to, and a "horrifying" openness in the discussion of various questions, began to introduce "amendments" and "resolutions" that blocked the application of

already existing laws and fell back on the favourite method of imperial rule—rule by decree.

It was the Russian students, young men and women (a new Russian type of socially conscious woman had appeared) who expressed the dissatisfaction that was felt against the government. These young people were supported by various groups of minor officials and representatives of the oppressed and downtrodden national minorities. They also gained the sympathy of various respectable sections of society, particularly the educated nobility, whose children now associated with young people from poor families who were eager to acquire practical knowledge and work for the good of the people.

This was the soil that bred the social movement of the early 1870s known as the Narodnik movement (from the Russian word *narod*—people) or Populism.

The sacred aim of the young people of those days was to raise the people to their own level, to enlighten them, to enter into their discontent, to organise them and at the same time force the government to grant real reforms—give the peasants the land, set up a democratic, freely elected form of government. It started the great exodus that was to become famous in the history of Russia as the "going among the people". Hundreds of young people left the cities, left their families, the universities and colleges and, hastily acquiring some practical trade and peasant dress, headed for the villages.

They had only one method—the peaceful propagation of their ideas. They recognised no other. The thing was to live with the people and merge with them, gradually introducing them to the theories of a new system of society. It was to be propaganda and nothing but propaganda.

Their theories were those of the Utopian socialists. They believed that the Russian peasantry, which had retained a kind of rural self-government in the shape of the "obshchina", or "commune", could provide the nucleus of the future socialism. They believed that the Russian peasant—a rebel by nature—would immediately respond to socialist propaganda, and that Russia was therefore destined to travel a special road to socialism, that their country would bypass the road of "free enterprise", of capitalism.

The Narodnik study cirles and groups sprang up everywhere, particularly in the university towns. Like the move-

ment of Brownian microscopic particles, their movement appeared to be haphazard, but it was bound to lead to the creation of larger organisations. By 1869, the Chaikovsky Circle (named after one of its founders) had been formed in Petersburg. Many of the characters Trifonov describes in *The Impatient Ones* belonged to it. And it was from this nucleus that in 1876 there emerged the Zemlya i Volya (Land and Freedom party). And this is where we meet the members of the future "Executive Committee".

The Narodnik propagandists roamed far and wide across the country. As blacksmiths, saddlers, midwives, craftsmen, clerks, pedlers an land surveyors, to mention only a few of the trades they chose in order to get closer to the people, they went to the villages, the fairs and tramped along the trade routes.

There were only a few thousand of them, but they had many sympathisers. And it was upon these fine, industrious, unselfish and enthusiastic young people that the full weight of unbelievably harsh repressive measures descended. As always when faced with a liberal social movement, Russian tsarism lost its head, forgot even the existing laws, and acted in the spirit of the cruellest feudal hangmanship.

The young Narodnik propagandists were hounded everywhere. Exploiting the ignorance of the peasants, the authorities started up the most absurd rumours about them.

Nearly three thousand people were involved in the endless "Case of Propaganda in the Empire". It took the police three years to prepare the court case that became known in history as the "Trial of the 193", and here again we find among the defendants many of the characters in Trifonov's novel.

Some years later Nikolai Morozov, who was a member of the People's Will Executive Committee (and had been sentenced to 25 years' solitary confinement), wrote the following verses while in prison:

How well those days I yet recall
When 'cross my native land the word
To waken men of toil was heard—
Freedom, goodness, brotherhood of all.

But the slaves of darkness, whip and chain,
Raised the alarm as if in dread
And lo, the road that to the people led
Was strewn with thorns, with tears and pain...

And it was then that Vera Zasulich fired her shot and government violence was answered with revolutionary violence. The peaceful period was over. At two secret congresses held in 1879, in Lipetsk and Voronezh, the Land and Freedom party split into two groups, the terrorist Narodnaya Volya (People's Will) and the Chorny Peredel (Land-Sharers) group, which soon broke up and gave its outstanding members to the first Russian group of Marxists led by Georgi ("Georges") Plekhanov. The People's Will party then began its remorseless struggle.

The tragic dialectic of the Russian Narodniks lay in the fact that they were steadily forced away from peaceful social activity and compelled to break with their own moral and political principles. They were forced to resist by a brutally oppressive government, but they resisted this necessity as far they were able.

The Russian political terrorism of the 1880s did not arise out of a preconsidered programme; it was a gesture of desperation, the symbol and embodiment of the deadlock into which the Narodniks had been driven. In this their attitude differs fundamentally from all extremism with its failure to appreciate the fact that the highest value of all is human life. Appreciation of this fact was, however, highly characteristic of the foremost representatives of the Russian Narodnik movement.

It could be said that the Russian revolutionaries were driven to terrorism. The drama of their inner life was even more intense than their outward struggle. They realised into what a welter of depravity terrorism was plunging them, but they could not help themselves—there was no middle path. And besides, the *narod,* the people, which in their view was first and foremost the peasantry, were not yet ready to accept socialist propaganda.

After twenty years in prison Vera Figner, one of the most intelligent women in Russian history, wrote in her reflections on the work of the terrorist party: "We competed with the government in perverting society," she admitted that they had been on the verge of killing their own innocent comrades.

The movement was foredoomed to self-innervation and spiritual bankruptcy. Its tragedy lay in the fact that the best of its members, including Zhelyabov, realised this.

The historical necessity of their method of action was acknowledged by subsequent generations of revolutionaries,

including the Bolshevik Social-Democrats. Lenin called them the "heroes of the People's Will". There is a complex historical linkage between them and the generation that carried through the October revolution of 1917. While categorically rejecting individual terror as a method of struggle, the founder of Bolshevism and leader of the October Revolution, paid tribute to their unexampled heroism, their hatred of tsarism, their brilliant organisation and discipline, and their impeccable personal honesty. Like Marx, Lenin saw the historical inevitability of their action in the short period of the mid-seventies and the early 1880s. In his eyes the drama of their movement was the lofty drama of history, not the sensation-seeking tragi-farce of, for example, the terrorism practised by the Socialist-Revolutionaries in the early 1900s.

The famous Russian historian V. S. Klyuchevsky wrote, "The subject-matter of history is that in history which does not pass, such as heredity, but the lessons gained, the unfinished process, the eternal law. By studying the grandfathers we learn about the grandsons."

This persistently disquieting sensation of "incompleteness", of an unbroken chain of which you yourself are one of the links is essential to the artist who wants not merely to "reconstruct" a certain period for the reader as many historical novels do, but to make himself part of that other period of time, even at the price of battering his own Ego; to become, as it were, our envoy to that period. For the writer of this type the sense of history is intensified by the compassion that it acquires through the humanising influence of so intimate a knowledge of other lives.

Trifonov possesses this humanised sense of history and that fact alone makes *The Impatient Ones* an important book.

It was the historicity of Trifonov's thinking that prompted him to introduce the resumé chapters that I mentioned earlier. These chapters provide the missing links in the chain of the century that has passed since the hero's splendid parting with this life. They, in turn, are closely interwoven. *A Voice from Afar, Clio-72, Yet Another Forgotten Voice, And Yet Another Voice* are all built out of the testimonies of contemporaries, eye-witnesses and participants. Breaking into the dense flow of the story, these testimonies give it an added dimension.

But this is not their only purpose. The author becomes a silent interlocutor of the "voices", and as he listens to them a silence falls upon the scene and the flow of the narrative is momentarily stilled. History must be heard! It is significant that the author's narrative comes out well from this direct link-up with the documents, that it all fits together as naturally and easily as a train with automatic couplings. The *Clio* chapters contrast with the *Voice* chapters. Here the voice of the present is not silent and they are appropriately designated by the year 1972, the year when the book was published.

What happened afterwards? The *Clio* chapters supply the answers in such a way as to create a sensation of the continuity of the process of historical existence. They suggest both the heroes' longing for the future and the invincible desire of our contemporary historian to reach back to them. Here is a passage where we suddenly become intensely aware of this electrical charge, this "tremor" of history....

"The envelope ... contains samples of the wire and Rühmkorff coil found in Sitsyanko's house, wrapped in cotton wool. The wire is good strong stuff, and well insulated. It must have taken a powerful blow with a spade to cut through it. These are pieces of the wire and coil that Zhelyabov used at Aleksandrovsk. Cart, 'fire away!', wire, pantry, cotton wool, envelope, folder tied with thick tape, Pirogov Street, August, a trolleybus going in the direction of the Luzhniki Stadium...."

The wind of history reaches us in a few brief phrases. A whole century is compressed and we see them both: Zhelyabov in the autumn mud, in the blinding darkness, trying to blow up the royal train, and the author of the novel in the Main Historical Archives in Pirogov Street of present-day Moscow, while outside the window the trolleybuses take the cheerful sports fans to the famous "Olympic" stadium at Luzhniki.

With a sure psychological touch Trifonov follows the Russian classical tradition of conveying his moral through history. Gradually, using contemporary rhythms and the respect most people have nowadays for the documentary, he creates in us a feeling of *being involved* in history, in the sufferings and struggle of those who lived before us. He tries to break through the preoccupations of present-day life with all its amusements and anxieties, its all-embracing information media. He wants to bring the reader up short. And he succeeds.

Another merit of this book is its scholarly approach, its

bibliographical and historiographical involvement in the vast literature about the Russian revolutionary Narodnik movement that over the last seventy years has become a special branch of our historical library. Trifonov is no neophyte pouncing on an unusual life merely because of its reader appeal. He is fully equipped with the knowledge of a historian, with a love for his subject, which is noticeably wider than the fate of his hero and virtually provides us with a compressed encyclopedic summing up of the age and the movement, its characters, topography, and philosophy, particularly the latter.

Historical sources are like a tree. One has to see through the quivering of the leaves and the tangle of branches to the main trunk in order to be able to make the return journey. One must also be able to enjoy testing, sniffing out and sniffing at documents. Only then does one see the far-reaching vistas of the free-ranging novel. Trifonov has done this work and it is this mass of background knowledge that makes his narrative so intricately and closely woven.

Documentary facts rub shoulders with incident, dialogue and psychological analysis. A character described in two or three succinct phrases is easily recognised many pages later at a different moment in his life. Yuri Tynyanov, writer and critic, and a distinguished historical novelist, wrote in the thirties, "I begin where the document ends." There can be no casting aside of the document or mechanical recasting of it into scenes and dialogues; but there can be a very special mobile connection that makes the author's version of events entirely convincing. And Trifonov makes free use of this right. In the course of his thoughts about the failure of Zhelyabov's attempt to blow up the tsar's train at Aleksandrovsk, for example, he introduces a logical picture of the state of mind of the young traitor Vanichka Okladsky, who was later to become an inveterate provocateur, the "evil genius" of the People's Will, and who at the crucial moment cut the wire leading to the charge of dynamite under the line. There is the same suggestion of historical supposition in the account of a possible meeting between Zhelyabov and Nechayev, the notorious anarchistic adventurer, who was by that time a prisoner in the Peter and Paul Fortress. Reconstructing Zhelyabov's character and the logic of events a hundred years later, Trifonov achieves a striking sense of reality in this scene.

He begins his account of Zhelyabov's life from the southern,

Odessa, period of his youth and devotes a considerable part of the book to it without hurrying to pass on to the main and widely known events. Here, too, one notices a distinctive calm control of his knowledge and an ability to plan for long-range effect.

This period in the life of the future leader of the People's Will party is little known and can be traced only from references in remote sources. This is probably the reason why these years in Zhelyabov's life have quite often received superficial treatment. Trifonov, on the other hand, rightly considering them the formative years, creates a broad panorama of South Russia, Odessa, the Odessa steppelands, Zhelyabov's peasant life in the village as a child, and shows the background for his disillusionment with the idea of turning the peasant into "a critical and thinking individual", that is to say, a force capable of responding at once to socialist propaganda. We are also shown the crucial moment of his inevitable break with his family, with his wife, who was simply unable to endure the semi-communal, semi-illegal, wandering, spied-on life of the eternal revolutionary outcast. Later, she pronounces a curse on her regicide husband and disowns him, but still cannot escape the fate of outcast from respectable and loyal society.

Trifonov skilfully sketches the characters of the young intellectuals from the lower ranks of society who are joining or have already joined the movement. Many of them are people with romantic, chivalrous or revolutionary natures, "predestined" for this fate. There are women with fantastic biographies. It is here, in the south, that we get to know the kind of arguments that went on between the young radicals and the liberals, and the debates between the young radicals themselves, the "accursed questions" of the movement that were to become crucial to the struggle a few years later.

In these "southern chapters" we are also introduced to the members of the tsarist secret police and are able to trace their "evolution", from the semi-patriarchal blimps of the previous reign, who relied mainly on brute force rather than carefully considered systems of detection, to the Jesuitical police virtuosos such as Sudeikin, Dobrzhinsky, Plehve and others, who became "famous" for introducing provocation as a "legitimate" method for combating the revolutionaries.

Then come the main events: the splitting of the Land and Freedom party, the formation of the legendary Executive

Committee of the People's Will party, and their carrying out of the sentence of execution upon the tsar on March 1st, 1881, followed by the trial and their own execution.

Trifonov has created a group portrait of the generation that held the stage in one of the most intricate and dramatic periods in the Russian revolutionary movement. This generation fulfilled itself. Burning with impatience to see their people developed and free, they decided, as they said themselves, to "give history a push", and followed their splendid and tragic road to the end.

A. Svobodin

Chapter One

By the end of the seventies it was quite obvious to those who were living at the time that Russia was sick. The only debatable points were what the sickness was and how it could be cured. Exhortations, prophecies and curses resounded at home and abroad, at semi-secret gatherings, in the noisier sections of the press, in fashionable journals and the most desperate underground newssheets. Some ascribed this mysterious Russian malady to an impoverishment of the national spirit, others to a weakening of state power, and others, on the contrary, to its excessive intensification. Some saw the source of the infection in domestic thievery, others put it down to the Poles, yet others to the Bironian times at court which Russia had been unable to overcome over the past hundred years; and a great writer maintained that the cause of the trouble was a small tarantula, the *piccolo bestia*, that is to say, Beaconsfield, that had invaded Europe. There were even some people who insisted that the whole detestable system should be destroyed, and as for what should follow—well, that could be decided later. But what had actually happened? Everything seemed to be running its normal course. The cities were growing, the railways were spreading vigorously in all directions, businessmen were making fortunes, peasants were rebelling, landowners were drinking tea on their verandas, writers were turning out novels; and yet, something was amiss with this country, a deep-seated ulcer was gnawing at its vitals. All Russia was beset by disillusionment. It was disillusioned with the reforms, disillusioned with the Balkan war; the authorities were disillusioned with their power, the admirers of the people were disillusioned with the people. There was suddenly a vast number of individuals who were tired of living. "The Russian land seems to have lost the strength to hold its people!" was the bitter judgement of the writer who had been frightening everyone with the tarantula.

Those who were living at the time never did understand what was happening. Unaware of the causes, they observed the consequences with fear and astonishment. Only several decades later would this time of spiritual confusion, disillusion and general discontent be defined as the *maturing of a revolutionary situation*. But it had all begun rather a long while ago. Probably in the days when it could never have occurred to anyone that anything at all would ever begin. In 1866 (this could hardly have been the beginning!) a shot was fired at the tsar, the tsar-liberator and reformer, by a person of criminal intent....

Twelve years later, in the winter of 1878, in Odessa, a young man named Andrei Zhelyabov had to take a grave decision—to leave his wife, Olga, with whom he had lived for six years, and who, as he well knew, was deeply in love with him. But they had a son and he had to be considered. His wife was still a young woman, a singer, a musician, attractive to men. Her father was a gentleman of some influence, the owner of a sugar factory, a member of the city Duma, who would provide a splendid life for another son-in-law, and this might mean a quite different future for Olga. After all, what kind of life did she have with him? A hand-to-mouth existence in Odessa, two chairs and a bed, peasant drudgery in Nikolayevka from dawn till dusk (he had seen her one day face down on a field balk, weeping), worry, uncertainty, feckless friends without a penny to bless themselves, odd-looking women, ill-mannered, arrogant-eyed, smoking cigarettes, talking to her superciliously, and at night the clumping of heavy boots, police searches, getaways, arrests, disappearances, first for four months, then for a whole seven, the humiliation of asking her parents to stand bail.... Why should she have to bear all this? There seemed to be no end to it. Or perhaps there was. In fact, the way it would all end was only too obvious.

By now there were none of his old friends left in Odessa. Volkhovsky was in Siberia. So were Petro Makarevich, Seryozhka Zhebunev and Solomon, banished to the Tobolsk Province. Seryozha's brother Vladimir was under police surveillance in the Kharkov area, and Nikola, the third of the Zhebunev brothers, had got away abroad and was living in Paris. Anya, too, was far away, somewhere in Europe, and Ivan Kovalsky had been executed in August.

So, when one considered it all in the calm light of reason, guided by logic and not emotion....

"What brings you here?"

"We must separate."

"We are separated already. Everyone knows that. You abandoned us in summer. You ran away to Mitka's and had a fine life on his melon-field. You were selling water-melons. I know all about it. You were seen at the market in Bratslav.... Why are you torturing us like this? What do you want now?"

From the next room, quietly raising the door-curtain, a little boy appeared. He was very pale, with a small round head, shaven in the Cossack fashion. He stood still and stared with a kind of timid, impassioned attention at his father. The mother held out her hand as though beckoning the child, and at the same time barred the way to his father.

"What do I want? Well, the first thing is..." his eyes were on the boy. "To take what I left behind in summer, in the sack. It's over there, near the window, under the floor."

"Not any more, it isn't. I didn't want to take risks, so I threw it all away. What else?"

"I've said already—we must part."

He uttered this firmly, still looking at the boy. Firmness was their only salvation. It was all over and he must finish with it now and for ever. The boy, who had been hesitating, undecided whether to approach his father or not, took a step towards his mother. She put one arm, a brown shapely arm, round him, and hugged him. And with her other hand covered her face.

"Go back to your room, dear."

Andrei groped in his pocket for the German metal toy, a bearded Christmas gnome that he had bought on the way here, and broke it in his fist. They must learn to hate him. The boy withdrew and she said in a broken voice, "You want to crush us completely.... That's your way, isn't it?"

"You don't understand! We have no option."

She wept. He waited patiently, sitting on the chair by the window, watching the street. He needed her hatred, utter and unquestioning hatred—only that could save them. Olga looked up at him with a sudden smile.

"I know what you are thinking! I've seen through all your noble little tricks. But don't you deceive yourself. It's all quite

simple. You never really loved me!" She waited for him to offer some objection, if only out of politeness, so that she could instantly expose it. What she had said was not true. But he was silent.

Suddenly he remembered that autumn six years ago, when he had come as a tutor to Gorodishche, the country estate owned by the man who was to become his father-in-law. He had arrived with no idea of what was to happen to him there and still embittered over his setback at the university—the Odessa authorities had been prepared to reinstate him and had even petitioned on his behalf, but the bureaucrats in Petersburg would not hear of it and he would have to miss his second year. At Gorodishche both his pupils, Olga and Tasya, had been ardently sympathetic and had done all they could to show it, and the first few days had been spent recounting the whole episode in every detail. Now, recalling what he had told them and the actual incident, he realised that he had bragged and swaggered beyond all measure, although there had been nothing whatever to be proud of. What sort of event had it been, after all! Professor Bogishich, the silly old ass, had reprimanded Abrashka Baer (Abrashka had dozed off at a lecture). "Where do you think you are—in a tavern? Perhaps you need a pillow! Get out!" Abrashka had tried to squeak some excuse but Bogishich had bellowed, "Silence! Get out!" and stamped his feet like a general at his batman. Such behaviour could not, of course, be passed over. At first a boycott was declared and the students waited for some explanation. The rector tried to hush up the whole thing. Bogishich was evasive, but the Minister of Education, Count Tolstoy, demanded exemplary punishments. It was all so absurd. First there was the nonsense about the pillow. What pillows could there be in a tavern? The man was nothing but a semi-literate Serb, who hadn't even learned to speak Russian properly but had a fair command of such phrases as "Silence!" and "Get out!".

Tasya had teased him about it. "Serves you right! Why should you stand up for this fellow Baer!" It was not Baer he had stood up for, but the principle. Students were human beings with their own code of honour and no one should be allowed to stamp his boot at them. Olga, the elder sister, listened in silent admiration—admiration that brought a dee-

per glow to the brown-pink radiance of her cheeks. But Tasya persisted, "Own up, Andrei, you were the ringleader? You shouted, 'Down with him!' loudest of all." Nothing of the kind. In his written explanation to the authorities, who wanted to know who the ringleader was, he had stated that he had never been a ringleader because there was no such thing among students. Tasya broke into peals of laughter. "He's afraid even to tell us! Surely, you can tell us? They only expelled two from the university, you and Belkin. So you must have been the ringleader!"

Before coming to Gorodishche he had had two experiences of tutoring. In Odessa he had taught some little girls in a Jewish family to read and write but it had been too much for his patience and in the summer, before coming to Gorodishche, he had lived in Simbirsk Province on the Gorki estate tutoring the Musin-Pushkin boys. It had been a strenuous life. They rose at cock-crow, took cold baths, worked in the fields, mowing and hay-making, and these activities were combined with the study of literature and history, Columbus, Galileo, Peter the Great, and expeditions through the local country in search of legends about Pugachev. The master of the estate, the boys' uncle, a quite good-intentioned old man but a convinced supporter of serfdom, was always picking a fight. "Why do you assume, young man, that history proceeds by means of revolutions? How is this known? Who has proved it?" Their arguments reached formidable proportions. The old man grew angry and called Andrei a "gallows bird" and a "Saint-Just".

It was quite different at Gorodishche. The father of Olga and Tasya suffered almost the same tortures as Andrei, although he hoped to cure them in his own way. All the talk at dinner revolved round the subjects of press freedom and the Zemstvo. And when lessons were over there were trips to the woods, to the river or to their secret place, in a stone quarry. It was dark in the quarry and rather frightening. Tasya soon tired of it, and the other two would go alone. In the setting of those stone walls Olga's voice sounded enchantingly low. She sang Ukrainian songs, and arias from the operas, and one love-song was wonderful: "Oh, stay, stay with me a while!" The eyes of northern girls are too pallid to be seen at night, but the dark eyes of a Ukrainian are luminous. And in Olga's there was sympathy, all the time; it had been there from the very first

day. But why should anyone be sorry for him? He was healthy, strong, he believed in himself, feared nothing. One day on the waterfront in Odessa he had dealt with three drunken Greek sailors single-handed. But in those days, in their first year together, she had always pitied him. Her feelings were a mixture of pity and of pride in him—also incomprehensible—and a kind of blind, unprotesting devotion. She had been ready at once to give up her home, her father, all that she most treasured—the piano, her music, her sister—and follow him no matter where. His father-in-law, Yakhnenko, with the wisdom of the Ukraine in his bones, had once said, either laughing or with hidden paternal regret, "You do love your carbonaro, don't you!" The worst of it was that she still did.

His mother, who had never been too fond of Olga, considered her a bad housekeeper, and called her a pampered miss and a fumble-fingers, but even she gave credit where credit was due. "There is no life for her without you." In the days before his second arrest, when the tension was at its peak and he was eager to get to Odessa, and Olga had protested and wept, and begged him to give it up, to take pity on her, his mother had sensed that things were bad and had tried to talk him out of going and reconcile them. He would be better with his "lady", his fumble-fingers, than with those terrible rascals that would only get her son into trouble.

His mother had never set eyes on any of these rascals, unless one counted Mikhail Trigoni, who had turned up in Nikolayevka once, when he and Andrei had just left school in Kerch and had a few free days before their departure for Odessa. But in those days Misha had not been a real rascal. Andrei's father, on the other hand, in the course of his duties as manager of the Nikolayevka estate, had visited Odessa and found a noisy meeting going on at his son's flat. Just before this there had been a sudden spate of arrests: Felix Volkhovsky, the Zhebunevs, Glushkov and Pyotr Makarevich. No one had any clear idea as yet of what was going on. A rumour had got around that Trudnitsky was giving them away, and this was the point that was being debated with indignation, astonishment, conjecture and a general effort to get things clear. Andrei was already in trouble himself. In September the police had searched the house and interrogated him. Acting on a denunciation from that creature Solyannikova, Pyotr's neighbour, they had wanted to know whether he had attended the meetings at Pyotr's

house. He had managed to shake them off, convince them that he hadn't been there, that it all was a mistake, he was a most well-intentioned young man, son-in-law of a municipal councillor and member of the city Duma. The name Yakhnenko stood for something, of course. Andrei was released the same day, but the sense of alarm mounted instead of abating. At any moment the whole thing might be repeated and in a far more menacing key. Meetings had indeed been held at Pyotr's flat and he, Andrei, had held forth at some length, trying to enlighten the working folk, reading from books and brochures for which the authorities would not have a second thought about banishing or even gaoling him. Yes, that was a fact. And he and Pyotr and Solomon Chudnovsky had obtained these booklets from abroad, through smugglers, and passed them on up north. That was also a fact.

Olga was insisting that they should leave Odessa at once and go to Gorodishche. His father, who could not grasp one half of what was being discussed but sensed the main thing, the danger to his son, urged him to go home with him on the boat to Feodosia and lie low in Nikolayevka.

Neither of them understood! It was all very well for father in his ignorance, but Olga! She ought surely to realise that it was quite impossible for him, one of those still at liberty, to leave Odessa. It was he who held together the few threads that had not been broken. He was passing messages, warnings, writing to other towns. He had written in code to Anya Makarevich, Pyotr's wife, who had avoided arrest quite by chance because she happened to have gone to Kiev before August. And now she had come rushing back to Odessa, wildly excited, and together with Masha Antonova, the wife of another arrested man, Volkhovsky, had come straight to Andrei's flat in Gulevaya Street. They had heard that Volkhovsky had been moved to the Butyrka prison in Moscow, and there was news from Kravchinsky that an attempt would be made to get him out. So, Masha, of course, could not stay another minute in Odessa.

That evening his visitors had included Victor Malinka, who had just been expelled from the University for not paying his fees, some two or three others and also wives of arrested friends. There had been a vicious clamp-down that autumn and there was hardly a living soul left in Odessa (and all because of that villain or madman Yegor Trudnitsky! It was like a hole in a sack of potatoes, a sudden jolt and they had

all come tumbling out). Some time later Andrei was told that the great revolutionary minds in Petersburg, on learning of the events in Odessa, had passed a decision of their synedrion to declare the Odessa circle non-existent.

And it was amid all this rumpus and confusion, this talk about Trudnitsky and where to go and what to do that Andrei's father arrived. There was wine on the table, of course, and cards. Olga seated herself at the piano now and then and sang without much inspiration—their neighbour, a civil servant, was to suppose that Andrei Ivanovich and his good wife Olga Semyonovna were entertaining guests and having a merry evening. The father looked somewhat askance at all this. It astonished him that while one young lady was weeping and wiping her tears, another should be relating something amid peals of laughter while his daughter-in-law Olga sat at the piano singing. Most surprising of all was Anya Makarevich, dressed up in all her Parisian finery. Such a tall, pale-complexioned beauty with long braids and such a commanding, confident way of talking—she interrupted the men, silenced them with a gesture. Poor Ivan Zhelyabov had never seen anything like it before and had never imagined that such a queen of the ball could be a friend of his son. Anya was talking about life in Switzerland two years ago, in Zurich, where Trudnitsky had been one of the company—apparently he was hopelessly in love with someone, although nothing would have induced him to say who. "Perhaps it was you, Anya dear?" Olga put in. "Everyone falls in love with you."

Olga had been pecking at her all the evening. She disliked Anya. It was something untamable, feminine, and, as always with women, not simply dislike, but veiled hatred. When she and Andrei were quarrelling—and their quarrels had begun that autumn because of his refusal to leave town—Olga would call Anya "your Rosenstein". She thought there was something going on between Anya and Andrei, there must be, they had known each other since their schooldays, and in Olga's imagination there was not a woman on earth who could resist Andrei, and he, although generally indifferent to all of them, was ready to meet any half-way. That evening she had a good many digs at Anya, and some of her remarks were quite rude, but Anya was clever enough not to hear. The only thing they agreed on was that Anya also thought Andrei should disappear. But this was impossible. He hadn't done anything yet.

There was *nothing to escape from*! The others had at least something to their credit. Something they could be proud of. But what about the discussion groups in the working-class districts? The passing of books? It was all only in embryo, only hinted at. How could he suddenly disappear! Such admirable prudence would be no way to begin.

Little Andrei began crying in the next room, he was not well. Olga went to attend to him with the words, "Have we been forgotten, forgotten as usual!" That "as usual" had a twist in it. And Anya said quietly, "I understand your Olga. She is too much of a woman, she is a woman *par excellence* unlike the rest of us. And she's going to fight for you, tooth and nail. She won't give you up and she's right." He didn't like that. Right? Right in what way? "Right as a woman. Because you are what you are. Understand? A rather rare combination of molecules. No woman would let a man like you go without a fight." He said he failed to see why anyone should fight over him as if he were the Holy Sepulchre. And thought: Yes, and there was Masha, also a woman *par excellence*, she had been madly in love with Felix and she was going to rush off to Moscow in the hope of blowing up the prison and the Moscow Kremlin with it. They, too, had a child, little Sonya, only three years old. What would they do with her? And she was ill herself, rheumatism or something else equally serious. (Poor Masha! She had died last year, in Europe somewhere, the refuge she had sought in her grief after the failure of her attempt to free Felix. But she had made the attempt, a purely feminine, mad and impractical attempt. She had hired a road-hogging Moscow sledge-driver, and Vsevolod Lopatin had offered to help, and they had got a message through to Felix that they would be waiting at a certain spot. So when he was being driven by sledge to the interrogator's office, he threw a handful of tobacco in the guard's face and jumped out. They had grabbed him again, there was a fight, the hired driver had made off with an empty sledge and it had all ended in confusion and unhappiness.) That October evening in Odessa he could not have known all this, but Masha's tearful stony-faced stare had told him what would happen. Even then he had known that while others might hesitate she would stop at nothing.

And Olga? Would she be capable of such total sacrifice if it was a matter of life and death? Masha was older, she had had

experience, she had been implicated in the Nechayev affair, but in this final resolve, in this sacrifice of everything—herself, little Sonya—there was neither experience nor theory, only love. The very thing Anya had spoken of. And suddenly he had asked, lightly, as if in jest, "Will you help me to escape, Olga, when I'm in the old what-you-may call it...." He held his fingers crossed like prison bars. Olga had laughed and shaken her head, "Not I! I leave that to your comrades. That's their job." To which Malinka had retorted with a swagger, "And you think we won't? We'll get him out all right—easy as winking!" But Anya had said very firmly, "I wholly agree with you, Olga. But it's different with Masha, Masha is Felix's comrade."

Afterwards, when everyone had gone, this remark was brought up again and again and Anya was referred to as "that spiteful Rosenstein". Andrei's father had been very curious to know who Anya was and Andrei had explained to him in a whisper, "She's our Big Chief. She's the one who tells us who to punish and who to pardon." His father had also asked about Malinka, to which Andrei replied, "He's our Chief Executioner." That had offended the old man, and when he went home after that evening with all its high passions, tomfoolery and jests, worried but still none the wiser, he had told his wife that their son was misbehaving, that he had taken up with bad company, mostly women, and wild ones at that, who had turned his head.

Olga's hatred of Anya burned ever fiercer, although she had gone away. First she was in Kherson, then in Kiev, but there was often news of her and messages were passed on to her through Andrei and it was quite impossible to forget her existence. In November of the same year, 1874, there was another house search and interrogation in connection with the arrest of Rafail Kazbek, a Petersburg technology student to whom Andrei had sent a cyphered letter to be passed on to Anya. This letter had been seized in Kazbek's flat. It was important. It contained the story that Pyotr Makarevich had told under interrogation and that Anya was to repeat if she was arrested. The letter never reached Anya, but she disappeared before they could lay hands on her.

After the seizure of the letter Andrei was unable to deny his connection with the nobleman Pyotr Makarevich, so he said that he had never been to Pyotr's home, hardly ever met him

and, what was more, tried to avoid doing so. The reason for this, which Andrei, after some hesitation, confessed to Colonel Knop of the Gendarmerie, was the perfectly natural and commonplace one that from a youthful age he had been attracted to Pyotr Makarevich's present wife, Anna Makarevich, daughter of a Simferopol merchant, née Rosenstein. And although he himself was now married, the old feeling was not dead and still caused him pain. The letter he had sent Anna through Kazbek had been prompted by an impulse from the past and for the same intimate reasons he could give no explanation concerning the people mentioned in the letter.

Colonel Knop, the head of the Odessa division of the Gendarmerie, was not a very penetrating man, or perhaps not a very vicious one. The present lot were far worse, monstrous. Four years had passed since then and how everything had changed!... Two big trials, assassinations, executions.... Knop had believed and apparently even approved Andrei's chivalrous motives. He had also believed that Andrei had avoided meeting Makarevich and could not therefore belong to his study circle. And besides, Solyannikova, the woman who lived next door to Pyotr, and whose denunciation had led to Andrei's arrest, had declared when confronted with Andrei that this was not at all the same person she had seen at Makarevich's gatherings and had thought of as Zhelyabov. Perhaps this was a cunning move on the part of his father-in-law and the widow had been promised thirty rubles. Olga had acted resolutely. She had dashed off to Gorodishche and returned with her father, who had gone to see Knop, whereupon the colonel had agreed to release Andrei on bail of 2,000 rubles. Or perhaps there had been another reason for the colonel's lenience? Trudnitsky had not inscribed Andrei's name in his bloody register. Only the devil knew why! Perhaps they had never seen enough of each other to make a lasting impression and he had simply forgotten.

Be that as it may, the colonel bid his father-in-law a polite good-bye, shook hands firmly and rather significantly with Andrei, even gave him a kind of fervid wink, and they walked out into the street. He remembered the day distinctly. It was one of those clear, cold autumn days with the strong tang of the autumn sea that you get in Odessa in November. They walked along slowly in the sunshine. His father-in-law was perturbed and breathing heavily—his asthma came on when

he was excited—but he tried to joke and hide his true feelings. But he must have been badly scared. At first he said, as if to hearten Andrei, that nothing terrible had happened, just a lot of piffle, every decent person these days ought to have been in clink at some time. Actually, though, he was trying to reassure himself. Then he went off on his favourite theme. The only thing worth fighting and suffering for was the extension of self-government and the Zemstvo. Andrei was not in the least inclined to argue. He himself cherished both these goals. But how to fight? By what means? Only in the open! Not by this senseless business of study circles, in workshops, not by propagandising among the people, because all this was mere talk and hot air. Even on this point Andrei didn't argue, for he himself was coming to the same sad conclusion—although from the opposite standpoint. No, of course, blathering among the people was no damn good at all, any more than blathering at the top.

His father-in-law was up in arms at that. "You call the proceedings of the Zemstvo blather?! Who got the orphanage built? Who made them start repairing the sea-front? And what about the appointment of justices of the peace?" Olga was waiting anxiously for them, but by now they were both arguing at the top of their voices and walked past the house twice. Somehow it gave him no joy to be at liberty and walking in the sunshine, though he knew he might have been sitting in a cell under lock and key. All his comrades were in there, he was the only one outside—and only thanks to a lucky marriage. So he was in no mood to listen calmly to Yakhnenko's homilies. Two thousand rubles' bail and the role of rescuer still didn't give him that right.... "What good have you done the people with your precious propaganda, all your books and pamphlets?" his father-in-law proclaimed, going purple in the face and waving the short little arms he had inherited from his aristocratic Polish ancestors. "But we, despised liberals, we, ranters of the Zemstvo, do real good! Not the metaphysical kind! The people don't need two birds in the bush. Give them one in the hand!" Andrei lost his temper and shouted back, "The people don't notice all the good you are doing them! It's just a drop in the ocean!" "But if everyone contributed such a drop for the good of the people...." "Improvement of prison cells! All you're doing is spreading mats on the stone floor and curtaining the barred windows." "And what do you propose?" "Smash those

bars and not hide them with curtains." "And how will you do that, sir?" "I don't know yet!" Which was only too true. And come to that, he still didn't know.

The argument continued over dinner, but less aggressively, without rudeness. It frightened Olga when her father and her husband went for each other like fighting cocks. She thought it might end in a real quarrel. But it never did and never could, even after his second spell in gaol, even during the Balkan campaign, when they had worked on the committee for the organisation of volunteer detachments, and at the Molodaya Gromada Ukrainophile meetings, differences of opinion had always arisen between Yakhnenko and his son-in-law, there had always been something the one had stubbornly refused to concede to the other, but there had never been enmity. Neither of them wanted a break because there was still a mutual, unspoken respect. Probably, it was like this. The old man hated very many of the things that Andrei hated. But from this hatred they drew different conclusions. And besides, Yakhnenko didn't want Olga and Andrei to part. Olga's mother and all the Yakhnenko side of the family had soon decided that the marriage had been a mistake, but the old man stuck to his guns till the last, even when Olga herself had surrendered. He clung to the hope that his son-in-law would eventually see reason. Someone had heard Yakhnenko say bitterly about his son-in-law, "With his brain and his gift for public speaking he could have been a member of parliament or a minister in any country. But here? They'll pack him off to Siberia, and there he'll rot...." He reasoned clearly enough in the young man's absence, but in his presence, over a glass of wine, he talked a lot of edifying nonsense that was supposed to be for the good of his soul.

"I'm no Marxian, of course, although I am not a stranger to socialist ideas. But I just can't understand revolution! What good can there be in it? After all, revolution means *révolte*, mutiny, explosion. And an explosion is something ugly, unnatural. Nature abhors explosions, it lives slowly. Explosions are the children of hell, earthquakes, the eruption of Vesuvius." "But a man's birth is an explosion, his death is an explosion. The forces of death or the forces of new life accumulate and there is your *révolte*. In the course of six hundred years, from the time of the Tatar invasion, the Russian people slowly became slaves. Do you want the emancipation to proceed as

slowly as that?" "Oh, come now, sir! Slaves, Tatars—we're very fond of recalling all that stuff. What about our Cossacks? The Zaporozhye Republic? The world had never seen such freedom!"

They attacked and counterattacked and each stood his ground, and it was clear that this was not just a discussion over the port, but a charting of fate, of life, and yet, despite all this, he had put up two thousand rubles' bail without a moment's hesitation.

Two days after they had got him out of Knop's clutches, Olga came to meet Andrei in tears. "You've been deceiving me! You lied! I was right when I said you were having an affair with that Yid, Anka Rosenstein! Hasn't she any shame? Her husband is in prison...." Where had all this come from? Yesterday one of Knop's men had called to ask her in confidence about Andrei and the Makareviches. He had told her that Andrei himself had confessed, in writing, to having had intimate relations with Anya Makarevich. So the colonel, it turned out, was a bad egg after all. But this also meant that the matter had not been allowed to rest and there would be further probing. He tried to explain, but it was no use—tears and sobbing all day. He had never been blessed with much patience, so he left the house in a temper and spent the night in Moldavanka with some cabinet-makers he knew. It was a foul, oppressive night without sleep. Because he realised that it would always be like this—pettiness instead of the things that really mattered, reproach and recrimination instead of help. He met his father-in-law in the street and even he, grand fellow that he was, had a whispered reproach, "My dear chap, is this the way to behave? You're a conspirator, you should be able to hide such things...." What a funny little man he was! The next moment Andrei dismissed the whole thing with a wave of the hand. "All right, some other time...."

A week later the gendarmes arrived and once again he was under arrest. Apparently General Slyozkin—the one who had unravelled all the reports in the propaganda case—was not satisfied with Knop's version and had said that Andrei was to be dealt with. Olga wept while they were searching the house. He was calm, much calmer than the first time. Only his wife's weeping irritated him and suddenly he said, "Olga, please, stop crying!" The simple phrase had a surprising effect. Olga seemed to take offence and stopped crying at once. He was

released in March 1875 after four months in prison—again on his father-in-law's bail, for three thousand rubles. The old man was displaying traditional Cossack doggedness, fighting for Andrei to the last bullet. He and Olga went off to the country, in the Crimea. At first it was almost like another honeymoon. The exhausting peasant toil, the discomforts, the dark evenings—none of these things mattered. She was glad that they were together, just the two of them, free for once of intriguing women and malicious friends. But when summer was over, the ordeal began again. They returned to Odessa. There were stormy months ahead: the Ukrainophiles, the Balkans, the volunteers, new people, new hopes. No, the break-up had come not in the country, which Olga just couldn't bear—so she told her family afterwards—and not later on, during all the Balkan ballyhoo, the trips to Kiev, the meetings with the Gromada people, with Dragomanov, all the fuss and ferment around their magazine. Nor had it come, not finally anyway, even after that, when he met Anya in Kiev. They had spent a day together there. Pyotr had been in Petersburg, where the investigation of the Odessa circle was proceeding. Anya had begun to pity him, said he wouldn't last long, he was weak, unmanly, his mother who cursed and hated all his friends, was exerting a very bad influence on him, and in general he was not a revolutionary by temperament but a ledger clerk. She spoke of him as one speaks of a good acquaintance, but not of one's husband.

On the other hand, she was rapturous about the "Kiev rebels": Stefanovich, Mokriyevich, Kostyurin, Deutsch. They had started some fantastic stunt, at which Anya merely hinted. By means of a pretender and forged manifestos, supposedly emanating from the tsar, they were going to stir up a peasant rising to get the land divided up according to the number of mouths there were to feed. This was to be done on the pattern of a certain uyezd in the Ukraine, probably Chigirin, she thought. Andrei chuckled to himself. He knew the peasant better than any of these gentry and semi-gentry overflowing with such ardent love for the peasant. They knew the peasant "according to Bakunin", they believed he was always ready to rise against his masters, that he regarded the land as a gift from God and this alone was enough to start the fire of insurrection; only a small spark was needed. But how far all this was from the truth! Yet he made no attempt to dissuade

them, particularly as no one had openly asked his advice. He was not well known in this circle and only Anya, his old friend, was more outspoken with him. She was off on an important mission, very exciting. She was to go to Europe to get parts for a printing press with which to print the "tsar's manifestos". She would be leaving in two days' time. And it was the following night—her last night in Kiev—when they both realised people were saying this about them anyway and nothing could be done about it, because it was true they were fond of each other, but there had never been anything between them except for a few frivolous kisses and once he had carried her in his arms, but now they were parting, perhaps for ever, and besides they were grown-up people, responsible for their actions, he was twenty-five, she twenty-two, so their leave-taking was a long one, and the best of it was that feeling of complete trust, and later, when they had grown tired from talking, from love, and from a little fear, because they might suddenly be interrupted, they lay in silence; the window was open and there was a smell of early spring, nocturnal spring, and suddenly she said, "I think the biggest happiness of all is to love a man you can always say 'yes' to, in everything, in all his aspirations."

He realised that it was her dream. But then it came to him with a shock that he felt exactly the same way himself. And he was aware of a sudden, calm gratitude. "Perhaps this will still happen to us." She agreed, "Perhaps. If there is time enough in our short lives." And that was all, and in the morning they parted. Perhaps, if he had joined the "rebels" at once, associated himself with the cause that inspired her, he would have become for her that one and only person with whom both love and death could be shared. They thought a lot about death. The whole land-sharing plan was bound to end in a clash with troops and their own destruction. They would be the first. Never for a moment had Anya doubted that all the "rebels" would perish, but a general uprising would follow that would sweep the country, topple the throne.... Andrei realised that no one would benefit from this well-intentioned provocation and, truth to tell, he was also slightly tired of the overzealous, barren faith in an imminent popular uprising. Something different was needed. No, he could not go along with the "rebels"; they were deceiving themselves and the whole thing smacked of the Nechayev affair.

In early summer, he met Anya again in Odessa. She had recently returned from Switzerland, where she had arranged everything and obtained a printing press and type fount. At present it was all in Rumania, and Stefanovich was already stationed in Kishinev, preparing to receive the precious consignment. Anya was in a rather confused frame of mind. While in Switzerland, she had visited Bakunin and told him the plan of the uprising that was to be launched with the aid of the "tsar's manifesto", but the great revolutionary had for some reason failed to approve it, "Much too obvious, it'll soon be discovered."

Anya had come to Odessa with Kostyurin, a good strong fellow, whom Andrei knew well from Felix's discussion group. No, he felt no jealousy towards this high-cheekboned young giant, who looked like an "Alyosha Popovich" straight out of a Russian fairy-tale. His first glance at Anya told him that something was *amiss here too.* She inquired calmly and as if from a great distance, "Well, how are you, dear? How is Olga Semyonovna?" And it all sounded rather condescending.

She and Kostyurin belonged to a different world now, they breathed a different air: they were "illegals". She was no longer Rosenstein or Makarevich, but Ivanova, Anna Mikhailovna. They said nothing about Pyotr. The Chigirin affair—obviously, they had not abandoned it—was not mentioned either. Andrei was still one of them, but not to the end, not to the last sinew. Anya even emphasised the fact in a half-mocking phrase, "You, of course, as a supporter of state...."

No, it had not been Anya Makarevich with all her fearlessness and intellect and her ravishing feminine charm who had caused the breakdown with Olga. The cause was in himself, in all that he had thought and suffered in the past year, and that had made him another man. Such an inward change signals the point of no return. He could not go back to Olga, any more than he could go back to his old self.

Last year, in 1877, he had been moved to the Remand Prison in Petersburg. That had been in July, just after the Bogolyubov incident. The prison was still seething, there was still a rumble of protest in the air. Some of the prisoners were lying in hospital, crippled and disfigured, some were in the punishment cells, and the rest were refusing to take exercise. Andrei had at once felt the backwash of that hopeless struggle that goes on all the time in prisons, usually hidden but some-

times bursting out with a wild and desperate strength. Such an explosion, an eruption of volcanic fury, had occurred a few days before his arrival. General Trepov, Governor of St. Petersburg, had visited the prison. These gentlemen were extremely proud of the House of Remand, as it was called. For some reason it was considered the best prison in Europe. God knows why! The warders spoke of it as "our model prison, the finest in Europe...". Perhaps it did have some advantages from their watchdog point of view. When standing in the centre of the prison yard one could observe the windows of all six floors. The corridors and staircases were built so that a warder escorting prisoners could be sure of not meeting another party of prisoners—the worst thing that could happen, according to their cannibalistic code. During his visit Trepov came out into the yard accompanied by the temporary governor Kurneyev and saw a few prisoners taking exercise together. They bowed and raised their hats. Trepov then reprimanded Kurneyev. Why were prisoners charged in connection with the same case allowed to walk together? The political prisoners—and most of the prisoners in the Remand Prison were politicals—had been held three or four years awaiting trial. They were kept in solitary confinement and had to take exercise alone, each in his own individual pen. But taking advantage of a certain lenience on the part of the prison governor Fyodorov (in July Kurneyev had been deputising for him while he was on leave) the prisoners usually climbed over the fences of their pens and walked in the yard together. Hearing Trepov's question, one of the prisoners, Bogolyubov, said, "Mine is a different case."

He said it quite calmly, without any challenge, and it was perfectly true. He had been arrested not in connection with the propaganda case, but in connection with the Kazan Square demonstration. The one in the winter of 1876, when the red banner of the Land and Freedom movement was first raised, and there had been a fight with the police afterwards. The lanky Bogolyubov had been mistaken for another big fellow, a real giant who had given some of the "pharaohs" a pretty good hammering and safely disappeared. Bogolyubov (his real name was Yemelyanov) was purely a propagandist and by no means a fighter, but he was taken to the station and brutally beaten up in revenge for the one who had disappeared. That wouldn't have been so bad. They could have had their game with him and let him go, but then came the draconic sentence:

for participation in the demonstration forfeiture of all property rights and fifteen years' penal servitude in the mines! And yet this young man of twenty-five, the son of a priest, maimed at the police station and sentenced with such incredible cruelty, had permitted himself the meek remark, "Mine is a different case."

For some reason Trepov flew into a rage. "Silence! No one is speaking to you!" On learning from Kurneyev that Bogolyubov had already been condemned, he ordered him to be put into a punishment cell. The prison authorities did not rush to obey the order and, having made another tour of the yard, Trepov again encountered the lanky figure of Bogolyubov. This time the irascible general was extremely insulted that Bogolyubov—the scoundrelly convict!—did not bow to him and take off his hat. Bogolyubov had probably thought it was enough to bow and remove one's hat once, as he had done a few minutes earlier. "Put him in the punishment cell! Take your hat off!" Trepov shouted and swung his arm to knock off Bogolyubov's hat. The young man recoiled and his hat fell off. The prisoners, who had been watching this scene from their cell windows, decided that the general had punched Bogolyubov in the face. Pandemonium broke loose. The prisoners in their hundred hammered frantically on the walls, smashed furniture and shouted, "Trepov the butcher! Trepov the scoundrel! Out!" and threw down into the yard everything they could push between the prison bars. Trepov retaliated by ordering that Bogolyubov should be flogged.

When the infuriated general had left the yard, Kurneyev shouted the news of this order loud enough for all the cells to hear, "Now what have you done! Bogolyubov is to be flogged because of you!"

Poor fellow! First he had been half-beaten to death on suspicion of being someone else, and now, again in retaliation against others, he was to be flogged. Bogolyubov was led away. The three hundred prisoners in solitary confinement went frantic; the prison shook and shivered with howls and moans. The warders were taken aback at first but then they acted. They burst into the cells and put down the riot with fists, boots and rifle butts. How those gentlemen loved to batter the helpless! Especially when it was three, four or, better still, five against one. Andrei had seen them at the markets, dealing with thieves or Gypsies, or anyone who merely looked suspicious.

And now Andrei was told—during exercise periods and by means of the prison telegraph, the tapping on the lavatory pans "in the clubs"—what had happened during the suppression of the riot. Many had been "suppressed" into unconsciousness, some had been dragged off to hospital, others to the punishment cells. Leonid Dicheskulo, a comrade from Odessa, from Felix's circle, had been beaten up, and pushed not into a punishment cell—there were not enough to go round—but into a cellar, hot as a bath-house and with excrement all over the floor. Dicheskulo had told him about it himself. Andrei barely recognised him at first, when they met during the exercise period. His pale bearded face that had but a short while ago been so handsome was now that of a tormented old man with shifty, half-mad eyes. He kept repeating, "Another day there and I would have gone mad!"

Felix Volkhovsky had also landed in hospital. He had been maimed for nothing at all. Felix was subject to sudden attacks of deafness. It used to happen to him in Odessa and had probably started with his first spell in prison ten years previously. When the fury broke loose, Felix had been quite deaf and knew nothing about it. He had knocked on his door because of some personal need of his own and the warders were too busy dealing with the rioters to hear him. So Felix started banging on the door for all he was worth. The warders had decided this was another rioter, entered the cell and without more ado set about maiming him. How they must have revelled in that! It must have given them real pleasure to beat up someone who was quite helpless and unprepared for self-defence, especially someone as weak and ill as Felix.... Andrei did not see Felix for a long time. First he was in hospital, then sent back to the cell. Andrei learned what had happened from other prisoners. Eventually they got into contact by tapping messages by way of mutual acquaintances on the "club" pipes, then by means of notes carried by criminal offenders. Andrei passed on all the main Odessa news, particularly about Masha and Sonya, of course, although he knew very little except that they were abroad. And finally they met in the prison yard. The sight made Andrei shudder. Felix was bent-backed and quite grey. But he still had the same gentle, apologetic smile. Even in his story of how he was beaten and dragged to a punishment cell without knowing what for there was self-mockery rather than anger. "Silly fool that I was I

kept asking, 'What for?' There they were hitting me and I wanted to know what for. And those devils will hit you on the head, as if it's just a useless bit of crockery."

It was a warm day, at the end of August. The sunshine was not oppressive and they didn't want to walk in circles round the yard because half of it was in the shade. They simply wanted to bask in the warm sunshine without moving, and they stood together by the high brick wall. Felix quietly recited some verses, a lot of verses, but four lines had stuck in Andrei's mind: "We died unnoticed, as an ant dies, crushed by an idle foot, traceless amid the fields." And another thing he had said, in the first moment of their meeting, "So you are here! And it all began—do you remember?—when Solomon invited you to join our circle and you thought about it for three days. We had a good laugh about that then. What a conscientious chap, thinks things over seriously! You must try to forgive us. We dragged you into this fiery Gehenna, villains that we are.... But for us you'd be lazing about in the garden with your Olga...."

Was he joking? It was always like this. Some mildly mocking remark, but it pricked like a needle. He hadn't forgotten that it took Andrei three days to make up his mind! Just in case, he replied with a joke, "No, my lads, I'm not going to forgive your evil deed. I'll thank you for it till my dying day."

In his cell he started thinking back. Yes, Felix was quite right. It had all begun that day, four years ago. Solomon Chudnovsky had come round and asked, "Will you or won't you?" A straight question called for a straight answer. Solomon was a strange character. Always smiling, crafty eyes, round beard, round hat, he looked like any of the rather shifty Jewish characters who abounded in Odessa, congregating at the markets, bartering at the port, pulling off their various deals. This one had the same slyness and shiftiness as they, but it was all aimed in a different direction—at others and for others. He had been connected with Nechayev in Petersburg during the student disturbances and, so it was said, had even battled with Nechayev at their secret meetings. Later he had studied in Vienna, been involved with Lavrov's journal *Forward* and returned to Odessa—Andrei had known him during the university battles of 1871, from the student canteens and the libraries—and now this question "Will you or won't you?" Solomon was already a member of Felix's group, along with

the Makareviches, Andrei Franzholi and the others. Andrei knew all this. It was not kept secret from him. But in order to be *one of them,* he would have to decide.

Here the field of action was not just student life, funds, libraries, brushes with professors, but much wider, involving the state as a whole. Enlighten the people, teach the working folk political economy as propounded by Flerovsky and Lassalle, with a definite long-term aim. Bakunin had said plainly, "The people must be roused to rebellion." But how? By what means? Any means! Any means was justified, as long as it was fast, effective and bloody. Another idol, the man of reason, Colonel Lavrov, who had escaped from Siberian exile to Europe, taught from there that before rousing the people to rebellion one must train the people and oneself for it. And there was yet another teacher, spreading the word from across the border, the former Nechayev supporter Tkachev, who advocated conspiracy and coup d'état. Felix's group was propagandist and leaned mainly towards Lavrov and the Petersburg circle. Their routes were longer and slower but surer, and with always the same end in view: to make the people rebel! Andrei knew all this and sympathised with it, but.... But his family life had only just begun. Olga was expecting a baby. At home, in Nikolayevka, the old folk had not much longer to live and he was their support, a distant, unreliable one, but the only one they had.

He told Solomon this. "Do you think it's easy?... Allow me three days. I'll think it over and give you my answer." Solomon expressed his surprise. "Will three days make any difference?" Yes, a big difference. He had only just got himself a job, as a teacher in a school on the city outskirts. The salary was not large, but it was enough to live on, and even send to his parents. Besides, he was put off by the illegal aspect. No, not by fear of punishment, nothing of that kind. It was a sort of distrust, even loathing of everything that was done in secret. This was a quality of his character. He had always had enemies because he could not hide his attitude towards other people, but at least his enemies knew perfectly well that he was their enemy and were forewarned. He challenged them like a Svyatoslav, "I'm coming at you!" As an experienced street gladiator, he knew the rule of getting in the first blow. But here it would be a case of preparing in secret, lying in wait, telling lies, pretending to be someone else.

He was not afraid of speaking his mind at meetings honestly, openly. He was known in Odessa. People said he was a speaker few could equal. And the fact that the university had finally closed its doors to him and returned his papers in June was the penalty for his outspokenness and renown as a fighter. Now he would have to put all this behind him, transform himself from a gladiator into a mole and burrow underground in darkness. Nevertheless, on the third day he found Chudnovsky and said "yes".

The reason was that all that could be said in the open had been said. To go on would only mean repetition. To make any headway he must turn into a mole. He hinted at this to Olga. "What view would you take of your husband becoming a...." Olga stared uncomprehendingly, then she understood and panic flashed in her eyes, but she replied calmly, "I should still love my husband." She was still afraid of making some mistake and losing him; he wanted to have everything out in the open, to make a clean breast of it. At the first meeting he kept quiet like a good little boy, listening, watching, absorbing. The thing that struck him was an unmistakable feeling that this little gathering, these few unimpressive young people discussing abstract problems were a part of something huge that encompassed all Russia, and perhaps Europe too, and the whole world.

They were nearly all here now, in the Remand Prison. He saw them through his cell window and sometimes had the brief happiness of meeting them during exercise. Solomon was here, grey-faced from anaemia, still in his old skull-cap. So was Andrei Franzholi, a true Russo-Italian, the kindest of souls, a fat daring man who had made a jump out of a guarded railway carriage that had crippled him for life. Remembering that leap for freedom, the gendarmes had put Franzholi away as a highly dangerous criminal in the Peter and Paul Fortress. He had only recently been returned to the Remand Prison because of the approaching trial. Here, too, was Victor Kostyurin, "Alyosha Popovich", freed so brilliantly in March by Mikhailo and Anya but recaptured in July. And there was also Misha Katz, the unsuccessful cooper who—what a laugh!—had explained in court that he had turned from teaching to barrel-making because of his piles, because he wanted to avoid a sedentary occupation.

For the first three weeks Andrei scarcely slept at all. The

nights were spent in remembering, thinking whether he was here by chance. And the more he thought the more convinced he became that there was nothing accidental about it. It could not have been otherwise. It was not Solomon who had led him astray that autumn day, nor that grey-haired sage Felix Volkhovsky who had tempted him like some alluring siren. It was his own life and everything that was going on around him. If he had not joined Felix's circle, he would have gone off to the Kiev "rebels", to the Kherson propagandists, to the Zhebunev brothers in Odessa, the "Saint-Zhebunistes", as they were called. The whole place was seething, kicking, trying to get somewhere, and he could no more have escaped the common destiny than walk dry out of a thunderstorm.... And yet there must have been a starting point somewhere. Where? Yes, he was a peasant, one of the common folk, his father had been a serf, his grandfather nothing more than a slave. All those ancient wrongs, that dark, inhuman life. But he, Andrei Zhelyabov, had been a free Cossack since the age of nine, a student of the gymnasium at Kerch, which he had left with a silver medal, then a student of the Odessa law school, a highly respected young man. So whence this inconquerable pain, this *impossibility of reconciling oneself?*

It had happened like this. He had never told anyone about it before. One evening in his grandfather's hut, in the poultry yard on the Kashka-Chekrak estate, his aunt Lyuba was lying on the floor, sobbing and clinging to grandad's legs. "Daddy, Daddy dear—please, save me!" Grandfather locked the door. Someone banged furiously on it from outside, there were shouts and knocking on the window. Andrei saw the huge bearded bailiff Poltora-Dmitry, who was feared by everyone. "Open up, you dog. We'll have her all the same!" Poltora-Dmitry bellowed, evidently drunk. "I'll shoot you!" Grandad shouted back, but Andrei knew that he had nothing to shoot with. It was terrifying and he felt very sorry for Auntie Lyuba, mummy's sister. She was a seamstress, the prettiest of all the Frolov women, a kindly soul. She made his shirts, and now they wanted to drag her away somewhere. "Auntie Lyuba!" Andrei shouted, and ran weeping up to his aunt, but his grandmother pulled him away and locked him in another room. He kicked and shouted and hammered on the door, "Don't touch my auntie! Don't touch my auntie!" He heard noises in the other room, Auntie Lyuba screamed once or

twice, then it was quiet. Andrei climbed out of the window and ran into the yard. Poltora-Dmitry was leading Auntie Lyuba away by the arm and she, such a little thing beside him, was walking away slowly and calmly. Her hair was hanging loose and she was not even trying to break away. On her other side was the stableman Stepan, nicknamed the Circassian. Andrei was only eight years old but he understood perfectly well what was happening. "Auntie Lyuba was being taken to the landowner Lorentsov. Andrei had heard Auntie Lyuba complaining to grandfather before of how the landowner kept accosting her and threatening to marry her off to the hunchback Minka if she would not agree to "visit" him.

What exactly was meant by "visiting" the landowner Andrei did not know, but he had a good notion. It meant *violence*, something even worse than beating, even worse than the *flogging* Uncle Vasily, who was one of Lorentsov's servants, had once been given. Andrei had heard Uncle Vasily screaming when he was flogged in the stables. Flogging was the business of Poltora-Dmitry (it was said that he had flogged a Tatar to death), Stepan the Circassian, and the second stableman. Poltora-Dmitry was particularly hated by everyone. For some reason Grandad called him "Mammon" and said that he would not die a natural death. He was right. Another uncle of Andrei's, his father's brother, who lived near Kashka-Chekrak on quit-rent and considered himself a man of some freedom and independence, lay in wait for him one day and during a fight broke the creature's skull. But this was some time later. That evening when Auntie Lyuba was dragged away to Lorentsov and Andrei saw her tears, his grandmother's distress and heard his grandfather's impotent curses, he swore to himself that when he grew up he would kill Lorentsov. Lorentsov was a Greek, a tall, fat man with a rather somnolent, bluish-coloured face and eyes that were always half concealed under heavy lids. Lorentsov senior, an ordinary stonemason, had made a fortune out of carving tombstones, bought his way into the gentry and acquired the right to own serfs, and soon this new landowner, the son of a tomb stone-maker, was to be deprived of his slaves; emancipation was at hand, everyone was talking and dreaming of it. "They want to make the most of what's left to them," Andrei's grandmother would say. "They know their power is coming to an end, so they do all the harm they can in the meantime."

Andrei's mother and father arrived from Sultanovka, where they worked for another landowner, Nelidov. Andrei's father, Zhelyabov, was manager of the estate, although he still counted as a peasant on quit-rent. His grandfather, Frolov, and all that branch of the family, belonged to Lorentsov and it was far worse living at Kashka-Chekrak in the poultry yard than at Sultanovka, but Andrei spent nearly all his childhood there, was very fond of his grandparents, specially grandad, and did not want to go home to his father. Nor did his father insist. He was busy telling the old folk how to run their affairs. His mother would have none of it. She was terribly upset about Lyuba and urged father and grandfather to take the matter to court, in Feodosia. If they didn't, she threatened, she would hire a runaway soldier, a deserter, to take revenge on Lorentsov. This made father angry. "What an uppish lot you all are, you Frolovs! Can't she go and see him once in a while on the quiet, then there wouldn't be any trouble for anyone...." To which grandad replied sharply, "And you Zhelyabovs are lickspittles!" His mother also set upon father and he grumbled back at her: "Is she worth all that much! You cost five hundred rubles and five kopeks for good measure, but your sister didn't fetch even that." He often reproached his wife on these grounds, sometimes in the sense that she had cost him a lot of money (What are you sleeping for? Move yourself! You cost five hundred rubles!), and sometimes he would turn it so that it sounded as if she was not worth much by referring to the five kopeks' "good measure". It was, in fact, the actual price that the landowner Nelidov at father's insistent request and with his money had bought Andrei's mother from Lorentsov. And now, while the family was discussing what was to be done, Auntie Lyuba had disappeared somewhere. Grandmother said she had "fallen through the earth for shame". And Andrei had a frightening picture of Auntie Lyuba climbing up the hill to the spot where there was a dangerous ravine and he wasn't allowed to go, and there deliberately "falling through the earth".

Father and grandfather ended by having a quarrel and father said, "It's only your pig-headedness that keeps you rotting here in this bird-shit." And with that he climbed very proudly into the estate britzka, belonging to Nelidov, helped mother in and drove away. And the same day grandfather went to Feodosia to lodge a complaint against his master. How

Andrei and his grandmother awaited his return! For two evenings they sat on the hill overlooking the post road, watching and waiting. Usually when he came back from town grandad would raise his hat on his stick while still at a distance and as soon as he saw this signal Andrei would shoot off on the two versts to meet him. But this time he did not appear and it was only on the third morning that he arrived, bowed and gloomy, and merely said, "What's the use of arguing with 'em?" Apparently Lorentsov had already been to see the local magistrate and stated that his poultry man's daughter had got drunk, started a fight and been duly taught her lesson, as both the stablemen confirmed. The oath to kill Lorentsov had held firm in Andrei's mind till about the age of twelve, when one day, at Sultanovka, his mother had said, "They're all a lot of tormentors, the rotten curs!" That had made him think and suddenly he had realised that if anyone had to be killed it was not this blue-jowled Greek, but someone else, or perhaps all of them—these tormentors.

He remembered it now because it was there inside him, ineradicable, for ever, like the bomb splinter in the old soldier's body that aches in bad weather, and also because of the resemblance. The bitter wrong committed against one of his own kin, and not being able either to help or avenge. What could he, a little boy, have done against the huge Poltora-Dmitry or landowner Lorentsov? If only grandad had had a proper gun. But where could he have got the bullets? He hadn't the strength to do it with an axe. If only he could have crept into Lorentsov's room at night and cut his throat, like a hog's, that would have been the surest way, but the yard was full of dogs, they'd have mauled him to death. And it was the same now, as he listened to the story of the Trepov incident and how the gaolers had deliberately piled their birch-rods in the middle of the yard in full view of the prisoners and demonstrated in dumb-show how they would flog Bogolyubov, he felt the same torment of hatred and helplessness.

But suppose it had happened to him? Suppose the general had let fly at him and knocked his hat off? And then it had been announced for all to hear that he was to be flogged? And they had grabbed his arms, dragged him away, and stripped him? Endure that for the sake of living? Never. He would have killed the general outright with a blow on the temple. Let them

shoot, he'd rather be dead. In their view it was wrong to flog a nobleman, but for the lower classes, for a peasant's son it was quite in order, even a good thing. Bogolyubov was of Don Cossack descent, so he could be flogged. But just try it on me, you'll get a bash on the temple. For several days during exercise periods, by way of the "clubs", by means of "horses", messages attached to strings and thrown out of the windows, the question of how to avenge Bogolyubov, what should be done to Trepov, was discussed. Clearly the prison authorities were scared, but shouting and breaking up the prison were not enough. This foul brutality was not to go unpunished. Various plans were put forward. A certain day would be agreed upon when every representative of the prison authorities that entered any of the cells would be attacked and beaten up. Or else a complaint would be sent to the governor about the poor food or not being allowed to keep any kind of tools, and when Trepov visited any of the signatories in his cell he would be attacked, strangled or at least mutilated. This latter plan was proposed by an old revolutionary of the sixties, Muravsky, known throughout the prison as Grandad. Andrei thought deliriously over this idea for two days. He imagined Trepov entering his cell. "Did you write this complaint?" He would nod meekly as he approached, then pounce. For two days his fists clenched convulsively and he shivered as if he had a fever. But one day the news arrived that the whole thing was to be dropped. The Land and Freedom party had undertaken to organise an act of revenge. This blow, which had reverberations across Russia, was struck six months later.

Yes, he would never forget that prison with its muttering walls and tapping water pipes. It was like a bee-hive with its tiny isolated cells and yet this feeling of unity with everyone and hence a sense of being right and invincible. Every day took a little of his life, of his youth, and yet.... He had never met such fine people. There were celebrities Andrei had heard of before—Ippolit Myshkin, who had tried to rescue Chernyshevsky from his place of exile, Voinaralsky, the son of a princess, who had spent his fortune on propaganda, Rogachev, an artillery officer who had become a sawyer and barge-hauler, a man of legendary courage and strength, Sergei Kovalik, a colonel's son, once a magistrate, an excellent underground worker and a very clever man (Debogory related). And there

were also some splendid unknowns, some wonderful women, old friends from Odessa and Kiev. They had been rounded up painstakingly—not that they had made much attempt to hide!—from all over Russia, their only fault being that they had loved the people too devotedly, dreamed of a closer relationship, of teaching them something and learning something at the same time. What scoundrels, what bandits! They had been driven by a sense of duty. They yearned to give the people what they owed them, what their parents, their remote ancestors owed them. Here awaiting trial, for example, was Sofya Perovskaya, the daughter of a former Governor-General of St. Petersburg, who though still very young was said to be resolute and to have accomplished a great deal. Her family could trace its descent from Count Alexei Razumovsky! There was also Kolya Morozov, a bespectacled, incredibly thin and weedy-looking youth—someone had pointed him out to Andrei in the prison yard. He was the son of a wealthy Yaroslavl landowner whose family went back almost to Peter the Great. Well, the debt accumulated by these lords and ladies was indeed a large one.

Andrei usually smiled ironically to himself when he heard talk of this debt. Aristocrats and nobles did not inspire confidence. He felt that to them it was all a game, a concession to the fashion. And even when he was told what Sinegub had said when giving his money and furniture away to the workers, "My money is peasant money, it is sent to me by my father who is just as much a parasite as all landowners," Andrei frowned with distaste. It was just a lot of histrionics! What was the good of splashing money around, giving away your furniture; something else was needed. But what? He wanted to talk to Sinegub about it but they never met during exercise, and when the trial began and they were all herded together—on the first day—there were so many friends all round him that it made his head spin and he had no chance to talk to anyone properly. And though he did sometimes laugh under his breath and frown with distaste, he could not help respecting, even admiring them. All Russia was here, every stratum of society, but the main force was the children of the nobility and the middle classes, the priests, the retired military, the householders, merchants and commercial advisers, and their crime was that one mad summer they had taken it into their heads to become cobblers, coopers, ploughmen, weavers and midwives.

They had thrown up everything they had ever valued before, turned their backs on home, forgotten their parents. They had thought the revolution was at hand, that a social upheaval was inevitable. The great ocean of the people need only be roused, stirred up. Somewhere *La Belle Hélène* was being performed? Count Tolstoy had written a new novel? What, the one about the lady who deceived her husband? Whispers, a timid breathing, the trilling of a nightingale? It was all such rubbish, impossible nonsense, while the workers in the factories were working twelve hours a day, while there was famine in three provinces, while the peasants were being fooled, saddled with unpayable charges for their release from serfdom. And in the offing was the worst demon, the worst horror of all—the capitalist. A ditty composed by one of the prisoners was going the round of the cells: "From the walls a tapping, from the pipes a rapping, talking through the night. 'Club' debates by tapping, air thick enough to bite.... A life void of aim or motion, in a freezing rotten cell. We've all got indigestion, bowels are loose as hell...." That was all Fet's verses had been good for—to inspire parody.

Many of those who had spent three or four years in gaol awaiting trial had got used to this stench, to this life void of aim or motion and, worst of all, to the inanity of vegetating in prison. No, they had not surrendered, they had not taken the course of "frank confession" to ease their lot—of the hundreds arrested in connection with the trial only four or five had turned traitor. There had been that scoundrel Nizovkin, whose flat in Petersburg had been a rendezvous, and Gorinovich, who had betrayed the Kiev revolutionaries. He had got his come-uppance from Victor Malinka aided by Deutsch and Stefanovich. They had thrown acid over him and smashed his head in, but even though blinded, with his face eaten away by the acid and his skull fractured he had survived and had now become a particularly zealous traitor. And there had been two or three others, but for the majority this unreal life had become their everyday existence. Even the stubbornest had adapted themselves to it and were preparing to go on showing titanic endurance and elephantine patience. Many received letters and parcels (no one wrote to Andrei, except for one Christmas card from Olga). Others were visited by their wives, sweethearts, mothers and suitors. They would appear sometimes with frightened unhappy faces being escorted along the

galleries by gendarmes in brass helmets and Andrei, as he passed these piteous figures of *free* people on his way to exercise, would always ask himself whether he would like to see his mother or Olga among them and every time he answered himself with a firm no. He did not want to adapt to this half-life, did not want to prolong it. If he had another year to spend here, he thought, he would never endure it, he would break his own head or a gendarme's and put an end to it at once.

And another thing he suddenly became convinced of as never before was that the only happiness of such meetings lay in its being a meeting between people supremely close to one another, who understood each other utterly and completely—in the way Anya had said. Otherwise it was just unnecessary torment, unnecessary tears. What would his mother have brought him but suffering? And Olga? She would have hated his comrades, and cursed them all.

He watched the people who experienced this happiness with an envy that he would not acknowledge even to himself. One day Andrei saw a couple like this. He had come from his cell in the Remand Prison, she from outside, having been allowed bail pending trial. They had been granted the right to meet on the grounds that they were engaged to be married. Tikhomirov, yellow and emaciated after four years' confinement, and Perovskaya, a governor's daughter, a mere slip of a girl with a sweet innocent face. They were sitting very close together on the bench, whispering to each other. A gendarme was standing within two paces of them, staring at them with oafish curiosity. But all the same, you could tell from their faces; they were happy. Andrei met them later, during the trial, but he had first spotted them and been so sharply impressed that day in the prison gallery, when he had been going down for exercise. They, of course, had not noticed him.

In October the thing they had waited for and dreamed of as their salvation began. The trial.

On the first day the long line of prisoners was escorted by gendarmes along an underground passage (model prison, everything provided for!) to the building of the District Court. They moved slowly because many were sick and weak, some just out of the infirmary, some on crutches, but everyone excited, talking, joking, joyfully recognising one another, making acquaintances, passing on news, and this hubbub and excitement continued in the courtroom, where the crowd of

prisoners, about 140 altogether, took the public seats, while a minority, whom the judges considered the most dangerous criminals, were confined on a platform behind a special barrier, which was immediately dubbed "Golgotha". It was there, on "Golgotha", that Andrei first saw the mighty Rogachev, and Ippolit Myshkin, very tall, with a pale forehead and piercing glance, the gloomily intent Voinaralsky, the blond, derisively smiling Kovalik, whose calm solid appearance actually did remind one of a justice of the peace, and another much thinner, fair-haired fellow who turned out to be Rabinovich and, to his own astonishment—Victor Kostyurin. Their "Alyosha Popovich" had grown a beard and his crafty young Cossack face looked very imposing and stern. How proud he was of being placed not in the public seats but in the dock, among these renowned revolutionaries! Andrei had learned from the text of the indictment that Victor had been arrested in summer, almost at the same time as himself, but they hadn't met, nor had he been able to find out anything about him. Kostyurin had been kept not in the Remand Prison but in the Peter and Paul Fortress, as a *big one*. This was the real surprise. What had they got on him? What else besides the gaol-breaking episode—the attempt on Gorinovich?

Everyone had their doubts and surprises and the courtroom buzzed and trembled with the desire for communication. After solitary confinement, after all those dreams of having just one person to talk to, there was suddenly this ocean of friends. They could talk, look into each other's eyes, clasp hands. The first day was taken up with routine questions about rank, religion, age, occupation, and all the other nonsense. When questioned on their last place of residence, some said prison. Others, stating their age, replied, "When arrested, I was nineteen, now I am twenty-three." The next day Zhelikhovsky, a little spiteful-faced gnome, scarcely visible above the rostrum, began his mumbling of the bill of indictment, but no one was listening, and he could not have been heard anyway because the whole courtroom was talking.

Occasional phrases came through: "Attempted to make contact with workmen, for the most part factory hands ... and by means of outrageous books smuggled into the country from abroad.... Bakunin's supporters maintained that propagandists should make immediate contact with the people, organise them for revolution.... Lavrov, on the other hand,

recognised.... The abominable doctrines of Bakunin and Tkachev.... In summer the St. Petersburg circles...."

The purpose of Zhelikhovsky's efforts was clear: to present the two hundred involved in this case as being connected with other hundreds, perhaps thousands, as members of a vast and united organisation. They had even given it a name, it was "the great propaganda society". All the departments of the gendarmerie, all the police stations had been busy digging up and collecting details of arrests, searches, denunciations, expressions of discontent, trivial scraps of evidence, even letters of suspicious content discovered by the shameful means of perlustration, and as everyone knew, there was no shortage of such things in Russia! But even these mountains of facts were not needed. The point to be proved was the existence of a society. Nothing would frighten the government more than that one word—society. The actual sources of this wicked organisation had been discovered—the circles run by Dolgushin and Natanson and, of course, the propagandisers abroad. And now this charge, this patchwork quilt stitched together out of rags by Zhelikhovsky after many months of painstaking work was unfolded in all its absurd magnificence before the senators, before the little group of relatives and members of the public, and the great buzzing crowd of prisoners. Taken piece by piece, rag by rag, it may have been correct, but taken together it constituted an enormous lie. Long before the trial, the question of how to act at the trial had been discussed. Many had maintained that it would be better to ignore the whole business of the trial and final statement so as not to give any support to this comedy of falsehood. To hell with composition of the court, the counsels—to hell with it all. Refuse to acknowledge any of them! But there were others who thought they should use the opportunities provided by an open trial and shout for all the world to hear. Most of the "Golgotha" people, who had been held in the Peter and Paul Fortress, were opposed to all participation, and only Myshkin declared that, come what may, he was not going to give up the right to make a final statement. "I can't keep silent! Do as you like, but I'm going to have my say," he insisted. "I can't resist the chance of telling those scoundrels all the truth about themselves. Let me do it just this once, just one speech...."

He had, so it was said, sketched out a speech on a scrap of paper and it had been passed round in the fortress, discussed

and supplemented. Andrei heard all this from Felix Volkhovsky, who had got it from Grandad, Muravsky, so he could understand Myshkin's stance, so straight and tense, the special pallor of his face and the attention with which he was listening to Zhelikhovsky and watching what went on in the courtroom. Evidently he was waiting for the moment to enter the fray. Andrei could not tear his eyes away from him. This man was only three years older than himself, but how much he had achieved! Son of an army clerk, he had risen rapidly to the position of topographer to the General Staff and was known to the Minister for War as an excellent topographer and stenographer. Someone said he had taken down the record of the Nechayev trial. And now he had thrown it all to the winds, given up the service, and set up a printing press in Moscow where he had run off a good number of useful books (a few had come Andrei's way). He had got everything fixed up with the copies being bound in Saratov, but soon, of course, there was a police raid and he had to escape abroad. And there he had a fresh idea—free Chernyshevsky! He arrived in Vilyuisk, disguised as a lieutenant of the gendarmes, but his ruse was discovered, he had to run for it, tried to shoot his way out, but they got him, and put him in irons. People like Myshkin did not merely command respect, they infected you with a wild thirst for life, for struggle. Andrei actually felt his fists clench as he stared at Myshkin's white, nervous face.

"I would do the same! I wouldn't keep quiet either! If it came to that." He thought of his own fate with equanimity. He was in nothing like the danger that Myshkin was. They had no fresh evidence against him, only that old denunciation from Solyannikova about his visiting the Makarevich's flat, and the letter he had sent to Anya through Rafail Kazbek.

On the first day he met Pyotr Makarevich. Pyotr had been brought in from the fortress, and all four of them were together now: Andrei, Pyotr, Felix and a pale, sickly Andrei Franzholi with his arm in a sling. Even in Odessa four years ago, Felix had looked ill and tired, and he had always been half grey and stooped, but Franzholi had been such a handsome fellow. Pyotr had grown unusually thin, his face wore a dark yellowish tinge, and he was somber, bitter and kept whispering to Andrei: "I'm in a real hole.... I feel it's going to be penal servitude...." Andrei could sense something sick, hidden, a kind of veiled envy of himself—but only from

Pyotr! It was because he was hardly in any danger of such a sentence. But he was neither surprised nor offended. They were all equally young, their lives had been severed. It was not even envy, but a kind of sadness for life, simply a feeling of loss. For some reason Pyotr asked no questions at all about Odessa—but perhaps Kostyurin had told him plenty and it was only on the second day that he suddenly said, "I've had news that Anya is in Paris."

Another hour or hour and a half passed—the indictment was still being read, a bald senator honking away from the rostrum—and Pyotr whispered in Andrei's ear, "You know, I've been wondering for a very long time whether it's a good or bad thing that Anya never loved me. No, there's no need to argue. I half guessed it before, but the last three years have made it quite clear. I hardly had a word from her, she made no effort to get here, never took the slightest risk to do anything for.... I don't mean like Masha, who made that ill-fated attempt...." Andrei wanted to say, "Anya took her risks elsewhere. And they were desperate risks..." but he decided not to. He realised it was impossible. A bitter secret had been confided to him, a secret that had been pent up for years, and perhaps the only reason it had come out so frankly was that Pyotr felt that something similar must have taken place with Andrei. But that wasn't the case. Pyotr said, "The conclusion I've come to is this. It's good. It's splendid. It would be unbearable to suffer and know she was suffering. This way it's only half as bad. Don't you agree?"

Andrei glanced sideways and saw from the charred face and burnt-out eyes that the suffering was unbearable still. He said, "Yes, I agree." He remembered Anya's calm "He won't last out. He's not a revolutionary by temperament, but a ledger clerk." What had that meant? That he would start betraying them? That he would crack up physically? He could read the mortal distress and misery in Pyotr's eyes. Pyotr shared none of the general excitement, took no part in the arguments, the whispering, the working out of a common line. He sat quite still while everyone else kept changing seats, looking for friends, passing notes. Some even managed to toss notes across the barrier, up to "Golgotha". Pyotr revived a little and listened intently when the senator read out the part of the indictment referring to the Odessa group. "And in June 1873 Makarevich and Franzholi took up their quarters in

Svechinsky's boot repair establishment...." There followed a description, compiled with sickening police pedantry, of the whole book-smuggling operation.

"The Starokonstantinovo Jew, Movsha Smulevich Sima," the senator read out, pronouncing somewhat squeamishly, but clearly, the difficult Jewish names, "co-operating with the Proskurovo district police officer in the work of detecting persons engaged in importing prohibited books into Russia across the Austrian border ... formed a connection with Ios Eller (also known as Kantor), who proposed.... Sima, on instructions of the police officer, agreed to the proposal and arranged with Eller that the books should be delivered to him at a point within five versts of the border...."

How strange to hear, described in this clod-hopping language, that unforgettable night when Sima had lured Solomon Chudnovsky into the trap! It had been a moonlit, slightly frosty January night, or rather late evening. Andrei and Pyotr had been following in another cab behind Solomon's cab. Solomon, so they thought, had found out all there was to know about Sima and warned the rogue that if anything went wrong he would be shot like a dog. Solomon's papers were all in order, he had a splendid false beard, and off he went through the outskirts, in and out of the darkest side-streets to the place where Sima was to hand over the books, and suddenly he disappeared. As Andrei and Pyotr stopped their cab at a street corner they heard his shout: "The game's up!" The warning came just in time and they made a clean getaway. But Solomon—he was sitting beside them now listening to the officialese account of his exploits with that habitual crafty smile on his face—had ever since that January of 1874 been behind the bars of one prison or another.

All the Odessa people, of course, listened to the Odessa part of the indictment with attention, but Solomon kept up a running commentary of jokes and banter. When the indictment proceeded to describe the Makareviches' flat, where suspicious characters dressed as artisans were in the habit of assembling, and where, according to the reports of the informer Solyannikova, there was such silence during their gatherings that she thought they must be forging banknotes, Solomon whispered, "Own up, Felix, we did print a few, didn't we? We treated ourselves to a few smackers, I bet?" The whole thing was quite amusing, and even the story of the traitor Trudnitsky,

though revolting in itself, and even more so because they read out his "explanation prior to death", could not dampen the mood of recklessness and nervous gaiety. The nobleman Georgi Trudnitsky, so the senator read out, had finally broken with the group when he realised that their only intention was killing. ("Kill! I wanna kill!" Solomon whispered, making a terrible face like some Caucasian hillsman thirsting for blood, at which everyone tittered.) At this point Trudnitsky had decided that it was his duty to disclose the plans of his former associates, give evidence in court and then take his own life. Such was this unbalanced individual's noble intention but, unable to wait till the investigation was over, he had taken his own life in the spring of 1876. This Solomon greeted with a muted performance of the funeral march, "Bom-bom—ty-bom...."

"Stop clowning! We're all facing penal servitude!" Pyotr interrupted him irritably. Then came the charge against Andrei. "Zhelyabov, expelled from the Novorossiisky University in Odessa ... was acquainted only with Anna Rosenstein (Makarevich), whom he had met a few times in the street.... Yevgenia Petrova, whose address in Odessa Zhelyabov used for having letters sent to him, turned out to be Okunkova, widow of the army lieutenant of that name. Okunkova testified during the investigation that in September 1874 Zhelyabov asked her permission to use her address for an intimate correspondence...."

"What a wonderful woman!" Solomon went on clowning. "And what's more, she was actually telling the truth!" Again Andrei caught Pyotr's glance—it was hard and heavy.

The senator went on reading, "Vladimir and Sergei Zhebunev, Franzholi, Makarevich, Katz, Golikov, Dicheskulo, Langans, Victor Kostyurin and Zhelyabov have pleaded not guilty...." The reading of the indictment dragged on into the fifth session. By this time everyone was in a state of stupefaction and this ordeal by boredom and verbosity seemed to have achieved its end in smothering passions and inducing a dreary sense of depression. But before the hearing began, the president of the court Peters announced that "due to lack of accommodation" all the accused were to be broken up into seventeen groups according to province and each group would be tried separately. This sparked off a volcanic eruption. "No! Never! We protest!" came the shouts. "It's illegal! It's against

our legitimate interests!" Many jumped on to their chairs and started stamping. The biggest protest was raised by the prisoners on "Golgotha". What did this mean? An enormous delay, the whole thing would drag on for months, half a year, they simply hadn't the strength to endure this torment any longer. Gendarmes rushed into the courtroom, sabres bared. Many of the accused left their seats, women among the public began to scream and sob, some were in hysterics. On "Golgotha" Myshkin rose to his feet and his voice, unexpectedly powerful, cut through the uproar. "Even your informers," he cried, "couldn't stand all this waiting for the trial and put an end to themselves! Our comrades are dying! Going mad! You are cowards! You are afraid to try us together! Why all this farce of an indictment? You are afraid of your own lies!" Zhelikhovsky had disappeared, the senators fussed helplessly round their table, and all of a sudden it was announced that the hearing was adjourned. The gendarmes still brandishing their gleaming sabres, drove the accused to the exit. There were more shouts, "No participation! Refuse to answer questions! We won't appear! No appearing at a fake trial like this!" And only two men, who for the whole five days had kept apart from the rest, followed in the wake of the crowd with an air of casual indifference. They were the traitors Nizovkin and Larionov.

The next day the first group, the Chaikovsky circle from Petersburg, were summoned. Nearly all of them refused to participate in the trial and were immediately marched back to their cells. On November 10th it was Andrei's turn. He also stated to Peters that in protest against the court's action he refused to take part, and was duly removed from the courtroom. In the corridor he said good-bye to Pyotr, who was being transferred from the Remand Prison to the Peter and Paul Fortress, where he had been held up to the time of the trial. "If you see Anya... I certainly shan't, there'll be about six thousand versts between us.... Tell her it's all right, no ill feelings, I wish her happiness. And another thing, tell her the best thing that ever happened in my life was that evening in Saint Serge, in the mountains near Geneva, she'll remember.... And nothing more. Well, and...." There were tears in his eyes. He shook Andrei's hand and walked quickly away. His escort was waiting.

What could one do? How could one help? The sense of doom was there, in him, he had reconciled himself to it. In the

courtroom, while the indictment was being read out, he had said to Andrei, "You know, I attach a lot of importance to names. They aren't given to us by chance. Every name has a secret meaning. The thing is to discover it." He was speaking seriously, as of something he had been at pains to consider. Andrei found himself wondering whether Pyotr's mind might be going. "Take our Judases, for example. All those names are associated with something. The root of Trudnitsky means difficulties, Gorinovich grief, Nizovkin lowness...." Andrei asked what he thought was implied in the name Makarevich. Pyotr thought for a while, then gave a sad sigh. "Only one thing: Makar is always the unlucky man in the story...."

He was obsessed by the thought of penal servitude. And when it was announced, it seemed almost as if he had called it down upon himself. He was sentenced to confiscation of property rights and five years hard labour at a factory. After an appeal the sentence was commuted to exile in the Tobolsk Province.

Andrei had to wait some two months for his sentence. The group hearings were proceeding at a snail's pace. At the end of November Myshkin's speech thundered forth with hardly anybody in court to hear it—most of the accused had absented themselves in protest—but the few that attended were staggered, and recounted it in great detail. A few of Myshkin's comrades had attended for the express purpose of preventing the gendarmes from getting at him on "Golgotha" to pull him down and stop his mouth. Afterwards they related how wisely and skilfully the speech was constructed and how calmly and with what dignity Myshkin had delivered it. Peters was baffled. Several times, but in a faltering way, he tried to interrupt: "There is no need to speak of that" or "I request you not to use such expressions", but Myshkin stuck to his guns.

"Ippolit spoke for us all! In the name of our generation! What we've all been thinking! He's a brilliant orator!" those who had heard the speech reported enthusiastically. Someone was unwise enough to express surprise. "And he's only the son of a clerk!" But this objection was shouted down at once. "That's why! It's the voice of Russia! Can't you understand?"

Myshkin had indeed been able to say a great deal: about the tasks of the social-revolutionary Party, about how a new system, a system close to the people's needs, was to be built on the ruins of the present order, and of how this system was to be

an association of independent producer communes, and of how nothing of the kind could be achieved by peaceful means because the people had no other means except rebellion, which was their sole way of asserting free speech. A splendid point that! There was no freedom of expression in Russia except rebellion.... He spoke of two revolutionary streams, among the intellectuals and among the people. All intellectual movements were, in effect, responses to the stirrings among the people, the celebrated peasant reform had led to a situation in which more than twenty million peasants had ceased to be feudal retainers and become slaves of the state or officialdom. The people had been reduced to pauperdom, to chronically recurring famine. When the peasants saw that they were being allotted sands and marshes and little scraps of land quite unsuitable for cultivation, and, to cap it all, that huge sums of money were demanded of them.... "The source of all revolutionary movements is the extreme sufferings of the people and their dissatisfaction with their own condition."

Peters tried to divert Myshkin from general subjects and make him discuss procedure. "Will you kindly state in your speech whether you declare yourself guilty or not guilty?" Myshkin stubbornly refused to answer and continued his exposures, then he made a statement about the illegal measures that had been taken against him during preliminary detention, the fettering of his hands and legs, and the refusal to give him tea or even boiled water, or to allow him to see his mother. Peters could only reply, "Your assertions are completely unfounded!" Finally Myshkin said that this was not a trial but a farce, or something worse, even more shameful.... Peters shouted, "Take him away!" A gendarme officer strode towards Myshkin, his companions on "Golgotha" blocked his way, he broke through and seized Myshkin, a fight broke out and other gendarmes joined in. Myshkin shouted, "More disgraceful than a brothel! The women there trade their bodies because of poverty, but the senators here sell everything that humanity treasures most for the sake of rank and privilege!" The gendarmes were punching and kicking Rabinovich, Stopani and someone else who was defending Myshkin, and Myshkin himself was dragged to the exit. "Butchers! Torturers!" Shouts and hysterical laughter rose from the public. Zhelikhovsky, so they say, bawled, "This is sheer revolution!" Myshkin was carted away to the fortress. On January 23rd, the

sentence was announced, "Ten years' hard labour for Myshkin, and also for Rogachev, Kovalik and Voinaralsky. A few others received shorter terms of hard labour.

Andrei, like many others, was acquitted. He had spent six months in solitary confinement only to be told in the end that he was "not guilty". Some had waited two or three years for their acquittal. But who would answer for the years that had been snatched from their lives? Thy will be done, O Lord! "What for?" That was one of those "Russian" questions that Felix used to laugh over. No one knew what for and the responsibility was nobody's business. The word went round that all those who had been acquitted should get out of Petersburg at once because the government might suddenly have second thoughts. Another notable feature of the times. A person could be acquitted one day and locked up again the next merely on the grounds of "keeping order". The day after the sentences were announced—few heard the announcement because the majority were demonstrating their contempt for the court by staying in their cells—a rumour spread round that someone had shot at Trepov, the Governor of St. Petersburg. By evening the details were known. The shot had been fired by Vera Zasulich, the twenty-six-year-old daughter of an army captain. She had no connection with the Land and Freedom movement, or personally with Bogolyubov, whose brutal maltreatment she had avenged. She had fired at the Governor in his reception room, almost point-blank, but had only wounded him. She had then thrown down the revolver and calmly given herself up to the gendarmes, who had nearly killed her.

It all mingled into one. His release, his being in Petersburg for the first time in his life, the freedom that smelled of damp coal smoke, the huge dark granite buildings that rose freely in the frosty fog, the horse-drawn trams plying freely along the streets, the people sitting in them talking freely, and along with all this, a boundless admiration for this unknown girl, a feeling almost of bliss. *She could not bear the outrage inflicted upon another.* If only the whole country, everyone suffered thus! Later he heard the whole story. The southern rebels, probably Chubarov and Frolenko, had come to Petersburg to take revenge on Trepov, but the operation had been delayed. Either they had been unable to trail him properly or else had waited for the passing of sentences in the Big Trial, so as not to

provoke official anger and retaliation against their comrades. So two girls living in a women's "commune" on the Angliisky Prospekt, Masha Kolenkina and Vera Zasulich, had decided to take matters into their own hands. Masha was to have shot Zhelikhovsky, while Vera made her attempt on Trepov on the same day. Zhelikhovsky was not at home and Masha, in tears over her failure, ran back to the "commune". In the meantime Vera was waiting her turn to see the governor....

A gentleman in the tram said, "Poor Russia! If young girls take up pistols and start shooting at persons vested with...." It was not quite clear what offended the gentleman, whether it was the fact of the shooting of such personages or that this shooting had to be undertaken by young girls because the men were lacking. The latter conclusion, Andrei had to admit, pricked his conscience slightly. Where were the proud rebels? Where were the Italian daggers and English revolvers that these gentlemen carried as habitually as their tobacco pouches? Both Vera and Masha were connected with the "southern rebels". Andrei recalled that Anya Makarevich had told him something about Vera Zasulich, that Vera had been accidentally and briefly connected with Nechayev and had suffered for it—two of the best years of her youth in prison. And the chief Kiev "revolverman" Valerian Osinsky must have known of the girls' intention. Besides, just at that time, in January, he had been in Petersburg. Why had they let them go it alone? There was much that was not clear. Along with the feeling of joy and poignant triumph—so a higher justice did exist, after all, remember that, you accomplices of corruption, and tremble!—there was a vague sense of expectation. This shot was not the end but the beginning. Something unprecedented was afoot. Andrei did not know as yet how to treat this *new thing*, but he was clearly aware of its coming.

Volodya Zhebunev took Andrei to a house where they could stay for a day or two before leaving for Odessa or, at least, find an address to stay at. They went by tram to Ligovka, then made their way to huge Frederiks House, a vast tenement with innumerable entrances, and went up to the first floor. The flat was full of people. In one room some were eating and drinking, in another a furious debate was in progress and the air was thick with tobacco smoke, and in a third a man with a big beard and prominent forehead was gesticulating wildly, relating something, almost acting it out before the people who

stood round him listening. He was describing the funeral of some factory workers who had been killed by an explosion, and how the police, chary of the crowd's reaction, had not ventured to arrest the speakers. This had happened a few days ago. "Yes, gentlemen! Times have changed!" the bearded man cried. "The police are not so sure of themselves now! And, above all, the mood of the crowd has changed!" And off he went again about the shot fired by Vera Zasulich, the underhand methods of the liberals, and the fact that one of the "troglodytes" had expressed disapproval. Perovskaya, the owner of the flat, was barely noticeable. She moved swiftly, noiselessly, from one room to another, passing on messages, bringing cigarettes, glasses, forks and, loaded with blankets, taking someone to sleep in the kitchen. And again, as he watched her, Andrei was amazed—a mere slip of a girl. For some reason there was no sign of her fiancé.

She came up to him and asked, "Have you anywhere to spend the night?" Yes, he had; Zhebunev had already made arrangements for them to go and stay on the Vasilyevsky Island. For a moment he glanced into her eyes and saw that they were by no means the eyes of a girl. The glance from their dark-blue depths was somehow unnecessarily, even unpleasantly firm. But then she gave him a hospitable smile of welcome and her face became sweet and child-like once again. "If not, you are quite welcome to stay with us. There's always room here and we'll find you some blankets." And she pointed humorously at the floor. Someone called her from the other room and she left him. There was another brief conversation between them when Andrei took his leave. Perovskaya asked, "You'll have a sad journey home, won't you? Nearly all your friends have been sentenced...." He laughed ironically. "You think that's reason for staying here?" He had imagined a reproach, but even as he replied he realised there had been none. It was simply that she was always thinking of those who were still in the fortress. Everyone else was enjoying himself, rejoicing in freedom, but *her* thoughts were with *them* every minute. She said that she knew for sure that the judges had been willing to commute the hard labour to exile, but the tsar had insisted on hard labour, and that Myshkin and Voinaralsky, instead of being sent to Siberia, would rot to death in one of the central penal prisons. "But we'll see about that!" she said rather tentatively, and smiled vaguely as she offered him her

hand. "Greetings to Odessa! It's a good thing you're going straightaway. That's the best and wisest thing."

Zhebunev was waiting in a cab. The temperature had fallen sharply, there was an icy wind blowing and, while they were crossing the long bridge over the Neva, Andrei felt his teeth begin to chatter. "Home and the sooner the better! I don't like this Northern Palmyra. It *is* for troglodytes, not people!" But Zhebunev retorted with a laugh, "You can't fool me, brother! It's not the Northern Palmyra you don't like, it's something else." What he said was true. All these clever people in Petersburg were so sure of their infallibility. Some of them were again urging another senseless expedition to the rural areas; others now put their faith in pistols. But the picture was still not clear, except that something new was in the offing. Two days later he was sitting in a third-class carriage heading south. Soon the snow ended and the steppes began. He grew impatient, drank beer, talked to no one, and thought about the old folk, and about Olga. Probably there would be no boats to Feodosia, the sea would be too rough. He listened to people talking about the price of grain, the cholera, the fires in Moscow, and of how splendidly Odessa was developing; it was an American city and had outstripped Kiev long ago. The passengers changed, Ukrainian speech invaded the carriage, full of the rapid local slang. People played cards and drank from little bottles. The Poles had haughty faces but you could see they were just rolling stones. Peasant women with children on the platforms, either begging or selling. A boy with newspapers ran through the carriage shouting something about Bismarck. There was an occasional shower or drizzle and the nearer they got to Odessa the stronger the smell of garlic. But when they arrived the sun was sparkling, there was a bustling crowd, everybody was shouting, dashing about, the black-bearded porters with their red, wintered faces elbowed their way through to the well-dressed travellers while the ordinary folk humped their chattels on their own backs.

Andrei stood and stared in astonishment. After all, this shouting, milling crowd was also the people. It was boundless, unlimited. Just try to plunge in among them, rouse them, take the helm. How many would you rouse? An earthquake was needed, mountains must tumble, seas burst their shores.... Not a single person throughout the journey in that third-class carriage, where only the poor travelled, had said a word about

Vera Zasulich or the Big Trial, there was probably not one who had ever heard of such names as Myshkin and Voinaralsky. "Oh goodness, how thin he is!" Olga cried when she saw him, and burst into tears. Her hands were sticky with flour and she kept her fingers stiff as she embraced him so as not to smudge his overcoat. From her hair, her face, the soft warm body that he fondled came the avid breath of freedom, the ultimate freedom that he seemed to have forgotten, though it had actually never been far from his thoughts. He stood holding his wife in his thin arms and just breathed, not moving or saying a word.

There was one day when that old feeling, now so fleeting, returned. He made love to his wife, a fierce, ardent love. In the afternoon he and little Andrei walked down to the harbour together, and in the evening they visited their relatives for supper. His father-in-law went out of his way to be nice and immediately offered to help them with money. Dangerous subjects were avoided and none of the family asked any tactless questions; it was as if Andrei had returned not from prison but from some long and tedious journey. The only time when his father-in-law let fly was when somebody, probably Tasya, spoke of Vera Zasulich. "Is Zasulich a Jew?" she asked. Andrei expressed surprise. "I see this question has been of little interest to you. You don't read the newspapers. It was in all of them that she is a noblewoman, the daughter of an army captain." Whereupon his father-in-law coloured up and said crossly, "This question does not interest us; it disgusts us, if you wish to know! Turning Russia into an American wild west—is that the thing to do? Everyone his own prosecutor? As soon as anything not quite to our liking—it's bang-bang! We'll all shoot each other in the end!"

Andrei made no attempt to argue. Olga was looking at him imploringly. He merely said that he would try to explain the circumstances of this incident some other time; it was not quite so simple. "Not to me, you won't. I understand it perfectly well...." But the dangerous subject petered out. When they were leaving, his father-in-law took his arm and asked in a low voice, "Are you being watched?" Andrei said he didn't know. He probably was, but not openly. Actually he knew quite well that he was, but did not want to frighten anyone. His father-in-law said, "I advise you to go away at once. To disappear for a time, keep right out of sight." There was real anxiety in his

eyes. "There's trouble in the city. Levashov suspects everyone of sedition. You know what? Take a trip abroad. I'll try and get a passport for you and Olga. I can give you some money to keep you going...."

While Andrei hesitated to answer, his father-in-law enlarged enthusiastically on something that had long since been considered and decided by the family council. There was a certain aunt, a wonderful person, very well off, lived in Montreux. But Andrei had been hesitating only over one thing, whether to refuse at once or, so as not to offend the old man, to express gratitude and a desire to go that he must regretfully suppress. He had not the slightest desire to run away abroad. For it would be running away and, in a sense, treachery. The old man had no idea how often, when arguing against the doctrines of the Western propagandists, particularly Bakunin and Tkachev, he had drawn a mocking picture. "Just imagine a fight on a river bank, a fierce fight, men killing each other, clubbing each other to death, and over on the other side there's a crowd shouting advice on how to fight. "Straight left! Bash him with your right! Get in behind!" Yakhnenko lowered his voice, "If we can't get you a passport, we can find a way of getting you across the border, understand? We have people we can trust...." Andrei smiled. The old man looked like an inveterate conspirator. True, his desperate resolve had cost him a lot of nerve—he was pale and perspiring. Oh, how he would have liked to send his son-in-law off to auntie in Montreux! And surely Olga longed as madly for the same thing. "No, Semyon Stepanovich, I have a different programme in view," Andrei said. "I'll be going away to the country." "Oh, are you? Well, please yourself.... You're a free man...." His father-in-law was so put out that he broke off the conversation at once and walked away. The next morning he had a bitter argument with Olga. She wept and pleaded and finally reproached him for ruining her life. She could not understand why they couldn't go abroad. "Good God, you can go on making your revolution there!" she cried as a last resort. "There are workers in other countries, you can hold your discussion groups there just as well!"

He wanted to go away into the country not because he had hopes of reviving the old dream—although, to be honest, the dream still had a pull on him, it wasn't quite dead and, besides, he had had no splendid new vision—but simply because he

was missing the old folk, yearning for peasant toil, for horses, yearning for the feel of earth underfoot. Here, in the south, spring was already in the air. He didn't want to wait a single day. In Odessa it was all confusion. A few people from Zaslavsky's circle, which had been broken up, were trying to organise the workers; the "rebels" had rallied round Debogory-Mokriyevich and Kovalevskaya, but just as before Andrei still had little in common with them (they were all illegal, but engaged in trivial if risky undertakings), and there was also a cluster of radicals round Ivan Kovalsky.... Although Ivan himself had long since become illegal and was propagandising terrorism—Andrei had known Ivan some years ago, respected him and they were on friendly terms—his whole company, which included several radical Odessa ladies, was cast in the old Narodnik mould. Andrei could easily have joined them and together they would have dreamed up something like a settlement or rural commune, but he was put off by the blinkered high-mindedness of these good souls; they all seemed quite unsuited for work "among the people". It was the same old story. All these children of the nobility, of notaries, these pretty young widows full of good intentions.... Sasha Afanasyeva, a graduate of the Smolny Institute, an elegant willowy figure wearing a pince-nez and looking as if she had stepped out of the pages of the *Paris Review,* would say, "I am going to be a washerwoman! I'm going to wash clothes!" As if anyone in a village needed washerwomen.

But he probably would have joined them if they had ever got as far as doing something, but he realised at once, after his first meeting with Ivan Kovalsky, that they were still at the stage of discussion over a glass of port wine. He had met Ivan the day after his arrival in Odessa. In the street, of course. Ivan was a man of the streets. No one knew where he lived or slept, or indeed if he ever slept at all. In the year since he had seen him last Ivan had changed little. The same slovenly "nihilist" appearance, boots that he never cleaned, a tartan plaid over his shoulder, the same bear-like, slightly limping walk, long hair and the taut, healthy ruddiness of cheek that distinguishes the Odessa tramps and vagrants who spend their days in the open. A former seminarist and describer of the life of the religious sects (he had even had an article published in the *Notes of the Fatherland*), Ivan resembled in appearance and probably in his essential nature not a revolutionary (although

he never parted with a huge revolver and dagger), but rather a runaway monk, a wandering drunkard or crank, somebody like Gogol's Khoma Brut.

Andrei and he had entered the Novorossiisky University in the same year and very soon Ivan had been expelled for failing to pay his fees. Ivan had an astonishing gift of kindness, unselfishness and the ability to live easily in utter poverty. When expelled from the university, he continued, like many others—like Andrei himself—to show up at student gatherings, in the canteens, on the boulevards, propagandising, arguing, setting forth his stunning ideas, for instance, that of setting up a group to save young fallen creatures—seamstresses and dressmakers. In winter he ran the snack counter in a student eating-house. This was a social service in a sense—his only reward was a free dinner costing twenty kopeks—and he was quite outstanding in his scrupulous and thrifty management of the accounts. In summer he ran a students' library, also without being paid, except that he could use the library to sleep in at night. He was often to be seen clumping along in the heat with a parcel of books a long way from town, somewhere near the fountains. "What are you doing here, Kovalsky?" "Oh, just taking my friends some...." This conscientious book-carrier had borne his load a good ten versts. Later he disappeared among the sectarians and did not turn up again in Odessa until 1876, but now as an illegal, living under a different, Polish name.

Ivan recognised Andrei first, hailed him joyfully and, taking him into a side-street—they had met in busy Police Street, between the Greek bazaar and the seminary—started asking about their mutual acquaintances, Felix and Makarevich, about Myshkin's speech and, of course, Zasulich's shot. He looked slovenly, and even more *out of this world* than usual. Scarcely listening to Andrei, he talked excitedly and loudly, careless of what any passer-by might hear. "You've no idea what an impression it made! What else can we do, poor things! Just keep shooting and shooting!" He gave a guffaw, and then with a crafty look at Andrei slapped his belly from which the huge revolver was bulging.

Andrei could not help smiling. The incorrigible Fra Diavolo! What was there for him to shoot at here with his operetta revolver? Odessa, with its sun, sea and freedom, its idly strolling crowds, seemed to him the most happy and peaceful

of places, and the Odessa radicals, even the "illegals" just a bunch of charming pranksters. Ivan suggested having dinner somewhere. He said that he knew an excellent tavern, not far from the street market, where one could get a good meal at no great expense. Andrei could see that he had something more he wanted to tell or even show, and this could not be done in the street; seclusion was needed. The "excellent tavern" turned out to be a wretched shack with a couple of steps leading to a porch over which there hung a sign daubed by one of the bazaar's drunken layabouts. It comprised two fried plaice, a cucumber and beneath them an inscription "White Inn". What was "white" about the place remained a mystery. It looked as if it had not been swept or cleaned for months. Nevertheless Andrei experienced real pleasure in sitting down at the dirty table, looking round and breathing in the greasy smells coming from the kitchen. Pigsty though this was, it was the first inn he had been to for six months. A waiter came up with a napkin under his arm and even this dull but insolent-looking fellow Andrei found pleasant to watch.

There was not a soul in the inn. Ivan produced from an inside pocket the thing that had brought them here and showed it to Andrei. It was a freshly printed proclamation with the large headline "Voice of Honest People". This was no place to read it closely. All that Andrei could grasp was that it was a comment on the Zasulich's shot and therefore printed only a few days ago. His eyes caught several phrases about the killing of spies, about escapes and a change in the spirit of the time. They had now entered a period of "actual struggle between the Social-Democratic Party and this underhand government of Russian bullies". It was on the tip of his tongue to ask what this Social-Democratic Party was. Was it the same as the Social-Revolutionary Party? And did it actually exist or was it merely the dream of a few valiant fellows? Ivan hastily related that immediately after the attempt on Trepov they had decided to react in some way to the event, "to make our mark somehow", as he expressed it. "You see, this place was a land of everlasting slumber! It's a hard life, you know..." Ivan commented. He had assembled a few of his radicals and asked each of them to write a proclamation. They had chosen the best—which turned out to be his own—and had printed it the same day, only yesterday in fact. Their print-shop was no more than a suitcase full of type, kept in cigar boxes. There were no

cases and the right letters had to be painstakingly picked out from a pile of type. The printing itself was done with the help of a boot-brush or simply the buttocks. Ivan half rose and plunked down again on his seat a couple of times to demonstrate how easy the whole operation was. They had already printed two proclamations, one about the execution of the bandit Lukyanov, and the other about the recently exposed traitor Krayev. But they had not yet had time to distribute either the proclamation on Krayev or the "Voice of Honest People".

The waiter brought two plates of a kind of swill with something like cabbage floating in it. Ivan supped it greedily but Andrei recoiled—it was too much like the food in the Remand Prison. "So you think you've found the way?" he asked. The proclamation did not state in so many words "shoot, shoot, shoot!" but Zasulich's action was applauded. "Don't you think we have?" Ivan asked in his turn. The whole of that brief meeting with Ivan, the proclamation, the squalid inn, the talk, remained imprinted in his memory down to the smallest detail. Ivan's erratic, clumsy excitement, his habit of repeating with a sigh, "Ah, it's a hard life, you know", and the fact that he had been in a hurry and had eaten greedily, and that Andrei himself had also been short of time, and yet they had managed to speak of something important....

Kovalsky said that many now believed the right road had been found. But he himself was not so sure. There was Osinsky, with his frenzied propagandising of what he called the "disruption" method, that is to say, the killing of the highest officials who were known for their cruelty towards revolutionaries, the execution of spies, and the organising of escapes from prison. But these were really three quite different things. One could and should help comrades to escape from prison, but to make political assassination the chief aim of the party—no, he would have none of that! For that you must go to Sergei Nechayev. The crux of it was that the people would not understand or accept that road. "You agree, I hope!" Andrei said that had been his position for a long time but recent events had unsettled him. The government refused to make any concessions. On the contrary, they were putting the screws on even tighter. But how to resist? How was one to react to the flogging of Bogolyubov for instance? To the treatment meted out to those who had protested? To the fact that

nearly seventy people had died while awaiting trial? To the brutal sentences, the penal servitude, the banishments—and for what? These people who reached for their revolvers in fury could be understood. Anybody with a scrap of honour and the ability to feel another's suffering.... "But where do you really stand?" "Where do I really stand..." Andrei pondered. "Why put it like that? I'm not on trial, am I?" "Ah-ha!" Ivan cried triumphantly. "You can't say 'yes'! That's the point! Blood is a serious business. You're from peasant stock, you know what they'll say, 'The gentry's begun shooting 'mongst 'emselves!' At best they'll just be indifferent...."

Ivan also spoke with little approval of the execution of spies. Not that he was against any revenge on spies in general, but that it was sometimes rather difficult to decide what these gentlemen deserved—the rope, a bullet, a beating-up or simply general contempt. There could be mistakes, but the decision to execute was usually taken on the spur of the moment, by three or four young people, and the sentence was, of course, always the same—death. Nechayev, remember, had expressed it exactly, "Every spy must be strangled, then shot through the head." Now everyone seemed to have renounced Nechayev's doctrines most emphatically. We won't have anything to do with that devil! But we do, don't we? Just a bit? Gorinovich had even been shot through the head, according to the rules, but the son of a bitch had survived it. And even there the case wasn't quite clear. It hadn't been proved up to the hilt that he deserved death. A beating-up might have been sufficient....

"Then why do you go about with a revolver and dagger?" Andrei asked. Ivan explained that the sole purpose was his own self-defence. He had firmly decided and always maintained everywhere that you must never let yourself be arrested. You must always resist! When the revolutionaries showed the authorities they were not just rabbits to be picked up bare-handed and dropped into a sack, then subjected to any kind of maltreatment, starved, tortured, kept for years without trial, when everybody they tried to arrest offered armed resistance, shooting, killing if necessary, using a dagger, then the prestige of the revolutionaries would go up by leaps and bounds. So, on his dagger he had engraved the motto from Cicero "Oderint, dum metuant"—let them show hate provided they fear.

"And what's more, remember this!" Ivan insisted. "Armed resistance is sacred. It's defence of the individual. What we

Russians particularly and tragically lack, and for which there are historical reasons, is the ability to defend the individual!"

As he listened to Ivan it never occurred to Andrei that very soon, in a matter of hours, Ivan would have to apply his theory in practice. To be honest, much though he liked Ivan Andrei scarcely took him seriously. For all his intelligence, erudition and unselfishness Ivan was nevertheless in the category of these "mad townees". An amusing type! He lived almost like a Diogenes. He was chronically afraid of women. The radical ladies who from time to time tried to take him under their wing—which was no easy task because he shunned all protection, specially that of the other sex—made gentle fun of him behind his back. He was no fist-fighter, like Andrei, nor a sensationalist and conspirator like Debogory and his company, and yet all of a sudden he had got this idea of bloody self-defence! It even occurred to Andrei that the reason for all these public announcements which, as he himself had confessed, he made *everywhere* might be that they should reach the right ears in the form of a warning: you'd better not lay hands on that crazy loon!

When they parted Ivan said he had urgent business to attend to, but would like Andrei to make a point of coming tomorrow and telling "our lot" about the trial, about Myshkin, Felix and all the rest. "You're our first harbinger. Everyone will be waiting eagerly for you." He gave Andrei the address of the Vitten sisters; the house was in Sadovaya Street, second floor. Andrei knew the sisters, Yelena and Vera. They were both governesses and six years ago Yelena had actually been running her own special school, of visual teaching, in Odessa. But she had apparently given that up and was no longer in town. She was working as a nurse in a military hospital somewhere. Ivan said that the flat now belonged to Vera, but there would be about seven of "our lot", including Kolya Vitashevsky, whom Andrei should remember, and a former officer cadet, a Pole, who had escaped from Kherson prison only a month ago, and a few others.

They agreed that Andrei would be there as early as possible, at about five the next day to make a full report on the trial. They parted on leaving the inn. Andrei went off to the house in Gulevaya Street while Ivan shuffled away in the direction of Staroportofrankovskaya—his shoes were so patched and down at heel that he could only drag them along the ground. Poor

Diogenes! Little did he know that this was the last time he would walk in the Odessa sunshine, breathing in the smells of the sea and limestone dust.... For some reason Andrei told Olga that he was going to visit Vera Vitten. Olga and the Vitten sisters had known one another for some time and met occasionally at the houses of mutual friends. At such gatherings—for instance, at Semenyuta's, an old friend of their Gorodishche days—Olga and Vera, both musicians, usually played piano duets. With an unexpected frigidity Olga said that she had not seen either of the sisters for a long time and had no desire to see them. What had happened? Nothing much, except that they had both gone mad over that Kovalsky of theirs, the poor clown, and started holding parties with a lot of silly debate and ritual. Let them go hang. They had even broken with Semenyuta. With anyone who was at all respectable. Let God be their judge, she was quite happy to be well away from them.

On closer inquiry it turned out that last autumn Vera Vitten had met Olga in the street, asked about Andrei and been very surprised to learn that Olga had no intention of going to St. Petersburg to seek permission for a meeting with her husband. "After that she looked down on me and wouldn't even acknowledge me in the street. She's such a fool! For one thing, I couldn't leave the child, and for another father would never have given me the money for the journey. And anyway, what business is it of hers? What does she know about the relations between us?" Olga said all this in a highly emotional tone, her face working with anger, her lips pale and pursed. She aged suddenly when she was angry and her cheeks looked unpleasantly hollow. "What an air of superiority she put on. 'I see you are no Volkonskaya. Not even a Volkhovskaya....' "

Olga was dead against his going to see the Vitten sisters. It was dangerous, he ought to be more careful, at least for the first few days. Patiently he explained that he must go. People who wanted to know what had happened to their friends would be expecting him. He would pass on greetings, say how they looked. No one knew whether they would ever come back from those penal prisons, from Siberia. But no, she couldn't understand. She just couldn't. Once again he realised that her lack of understanding was not deliberate, but profoundly natural, instinctive, and as such inconquerable. It was the kind of thing people were born with and died with. But there were

other people who were born with *understanding,* and surely it was these who should be his real intimates. The night he had returned from prison he had talked to her for hours on end, telling her all about it, and she had listened eagerly, with tears in her eyes, interrupting his narrative with kisses and lamentations because she was passionately sorry for him and all his comrades, but then she had suddenly said timidly, "Andrei, darling, but Myshkin did shoot at the Cossacks, didn't he? And Alyosha Popovich is also suspected of murder, isn't he? There's a law against such things and they are punished, aren't they?" To this nonsense he had replied by asking why her own husband who had killed no one, nor even fired a shot at anyone, had been shut up for six months in solitary confinement. To which she had replied in an even more timid and pitiful voice, "But you were acquitted, weren't you?"

That was the thing in her that was quite invincible.

This exchange about the Vittens came after the supper with the family and his refusal to go to Switzerland. He realised that explanations were unnecessary. *Incomprehension* was doing its work and the end was near. He said that he had inquired about the boat. The *Truvor* would be sailing on February 3rd. He would go and live with his parents in the Crimea.

Early the next morning a student sent by Debogory dashed into the house with the terrible news that the night before, January 30th—only a few hours after their meal in the White Inn—Ivan Kovalsky and the members of his circle had been arrested at the Vitten sisters' flat in Sadovaya Street. Kovalsky had been as good as his word and offered armed resistance. He had probably killed a gendarme. The others had also used their guns.

Andrei learned the details later. Much later, during the trial. Somebody close to the Kovalsky circle had been a traitor. The police had got to know the Vittens' address. An agent had broken into the flat while Vera was out, on the morning of the 30th, discovered the type in the cigar boxes that had been brought there only the day before, and also, on the table, left there by some obliging hand, a manuscript of the "Voice of Honest People". Colonel Knop of the gendarmes had all the evidence he needed at his fingertips. He was on to a sure thing. To make the arrest he sent a whole squad of gendarmes, eight of them led by a captain. Two gendarmes would have been the usual number. But in this case they had known in advance that

they would catch the lot together, and that there might be resistance. About seven people, including two women, had assembled at Vera's. They were sitting at the table, having tea. Captain Dobrodeyev and his squad with a crowd of witnesses in the rear quickly took over the key points in the flat, told everyone to stay where they were, sat down at the table and began his questioning. Everyone's papers were in order. Dobrodeyev took down names and addresses, then said he would have to search everybody. The first to be called to the table was Kovalsky. Ivan came forward hesitantly, and mumbled a few confused answers, pretending not to understand what was required of him, then he suddenly whipped a revolver out of an inside pocket and pulled the trigger; the revolver misfired. Shouting, "Gendarmes!" the captain hurled himself at Kovalsky and upset the table. The lamps fell over and shots rang out in the darkness. They were fired by Svitych, the former officer cadet, but probably at the ceiling, to frighten the gendarmes. Kovalsky was pulled down and his revolver taken away. He then drew a dagger from his belt, wounded a gendarme and hit the captain on the temple. Svitych and Vitashevsky rushed to Ivan's aid while the others set about burning the papers. Scared by the shooting, the gendarmes retreated down the stairs. The house was cordoned off and from below came shouts of "Surrender!" Dagger in hand, Kovalsky tried to break through, wounded another gendarme, was seized, and fought desperately; from the balcony the other members of the circle saw him being dragged, bound and battered, into a carriage, and shouted to passers-by to help him. No one did and he was driven away. The others locked up in the flat waited for some time until a company of soldiers arrived and began a proper siege. It was said that Count Levashov himself, the mayor, was present and commanded the siege, swearing like a cabby.

Ivan had been true to his word in every respect, and had resisted to the last. He had fought with his revolver, then his dagger, and finally with bare hands. He had gone knowingly to his death. But had there been any sense in that death? Andrei thought about this as he stood on the deck of the *Truvor*, watching Odessa fading into the distance. Yes, there had. If his own fists clenched as he thought of Ivan and hatred billowed up so violently, others must feel the same, and in that lay the meaning of it. Ivan had known that he had been betrayed, that

for the printing press and the "Voice of Honest People" he was sure to get penal servitude. If such a saintly character as Ivan had revolted and shed blood, what kind of a world was this that they had to live in? The meaning of this lowly, down and out life on the street, a life that had neither desired nor sought anything for itself, lay in its final end. Hatred was the meaning. And one day from this meaning something would be sure to come, a great city, perhaps, many tall and fine buildings. He looked at the city melting into the distance and in the chalky dusk of that dim shoreline he seemed to see a towering multitude of houses.

Olga and little Andrei were standing somewhere on that embankment. He remembered how a few years ago he had sailed for the Crimea, exiled and renowned. The crowd had cheered him and he had been gay and full of hope. Today only his wife and son had come to see him off. The crowd on the sea-front had waved to an Italian singer who was leaving for Yalta. It all receded into the dusk, merged with the smoke and disappeared. He could see no one. Olga had said she would come to Sultanovka in May. It was clear that she would not. After three days at sea he disembarked at Feodosia and set about finding some horses to take him to Sultanovka. The mail coach would not be taking the Simferopol Road until the next morning. He hadn't enough money to hire a private cab and he stayed in the town with an old fishmonger, Luludaki, from whom his father always bought fish for the Nelidov estate. The old man was quite kind and by no means stupid, but he awakened unpleasant memories. He was a relative of the wealthy Afanasy Luludaki, from whose endowment to the Novorossiisky University in Odessa (for young people of the Feodosia Uyezd) Andrei had benefited for a time. In his second year he had for some reason stopped receiving the Luludaki grant of 350 rubles a year, a tidy sum. It was not clear what had happened, perhaps he had merely forgotten. The wealthy patron had apparently died and his executrix had decided to find another use for the money. The thing he afterwards remembered, however, was the sense of his own wretchedness in the struggle against injustice that his father initiated. In Odessa Andrei had not, of course, lifted a finger to recover the grant. He was ready to work for nights on end at the warehouses, in the docks, to earn enough money rather than lower himself to repeat those accursed words about "my

rank and poverty which entitle me to...". But when he came home in summer his father set upon him and demanded action. "We'll make that old skinflint cough up! She's got her own greedy eyes on the money! It was left to a good cause and she wants to rob the children of it, the sneak thief!" All his anger was poured out at home, however, and during the wearisome trips to town, which he and Andrei made together, the father spoke in pleading, tearful tones, but with unyielding obstinacy. They went to the arbitrator, to the Feodosia gentry's Board of Guardians, wrote applications, and demanded copies of liabilities and certificates from the university bursary. The attack on the executrix, a certain Maria Ivanovna Luludaki, was formidable, but she refused to budge. In those days father and son lodged at the fishmonger's who was a distant relative of their deceased benefactor and for some reason hated his executrix even more fiercely than any of those who had lost their grants. Andrei's father used to consult with this old man, Ivan Khristoforovich, as to how he might act to Maria Ivanovna's greater discomfiture. The whole thing was sickening to recall. Unable to bear these pilgrimages from one public institution to another with their inevitable pleas of poverty and hardship, he had quarrelled with his father and returned to Odessa before the vacation was over.

Ivan Khristoforovich noticed Andrei killing time at the market and hailed him joyfully. So he had to go and spend the night with the fishmonger. The hotel was beyond his means and, strangely enough, this was almost the only town along the coast where he had no true friends. He was returning home like the prodigal son, naked, alone and penniless. If only old Khristoforych had known what a vagabond and good-for-nothing he had sheltered that night! But Andrei's appearance was anything if not respectable. He had dressed smartly to cheer his parents a little. His dark overcoat was in good condition, scarcely worn (it had been hanging in the wardrobe at Gulevaya for nearly a year), and he sported a tailored jacket, a bow-tie, a slouch hat and cane, and a German leather suitcase. The suitcase contained nothing but a change of underclothes and a few books. What books? The latest issue of the magazine *Notes of the Fatherland*, Ziber on Ricardo, Kolb's statistics, which Andrei loved to reread, and something on history. Of course, there were also a few pamphlets of the *outrageous* kind that were dangerous to carry about (Siberia

was the penalty for any of them), but Andrei had grown very fond of them and cherished the memory of how well they had gone down with his study circle. Specially "How Come, Brothers!" A great piece of work! Said everything in five pages, how the peasant was skinned all along the line, first by beating and now by swindling, and all about the land and the Assembly of the Land. In the Remand Prison he had met the author—quiet, short-sighted Shishko. The poor fellow had got ten years' penal servitude.

And now here he was at the old fishmonger's....

At first it didn't go too badly. They drank wine and smoked Turkish cigarettes and the Greek observed that his father had become a less frequent visitor to town. Landowner Nelidov's affairs were in a bad way and he wanted to sell the estate. Then he asked if there was any truth in the rumour that there had been a trial in Petersburg and the tsar had again sent some young folk off to Siberia. He had heard something about Andrei, but evidently not from his father. His father had kept quiet about that, of course. Andrei had no liking for deception and, seeing that the old man was itching with curiosity (hence the invitation, the wine and the cigarettes), made no bones about the fact. Yes, it was all true, but he had been acquitted. His presence here presented no danger for a merchant of the first guild. The old man laughed, "Luludaki's not afraid! He was never afraid of the Turks, or the Tatar bandits, or the cholera. What could he be afraid of at seventy!..." Nevertheless he cautiously persisted with his inquiries. What was it these young folk wanted? What were they suffering for?

Andrei usually took every opportunity of telling people the truth and explaining the situation. He could speak for hours on end, argue with a dozen opponents and not give in—he had often done so at meetings in Odessa, almost to the point of blows; like the moralist in a fairy-tale, he could patiently instill truth in even the ignorant and obtuse. But this fishmonger, this merchant, who was, of course, an exploiter of hired labour, was not a suitable target for propaganda. And besides, it would be passed on to his father and his father would get the wind up. So he replied briefly, "What's it all for? Well, just for one thing really—justice!"

Luludaki laughed again. Ho-ho, justice! Well, there were some beautiful and foolish women who were always being deceived and always deceiving others. That was justice. The

worst things in the world were done in the name of justice: Christians slaughtered Turks, and Turks, Christians, the French bombed Sevastopol, the Roman emperors burnt people at the stake. It was the direst evil on earth! Direst because it didn't exist....

Such was the gist of what the old Greek said.

So in your view, Gospodin Luludaki, there is no point in fighting for justice? No, none whatever. It was all nonsense, of course, but now that they had drunk a whole quarter of wine, the discussion was becoming amusing. We Greeks, the old man was saying, are the most ancient dwellers on this earth and we have been harassed by savage tribes from the steppes, by nomads and brigands, by the Genoese, the Tatars, then by you, Russians. What justice is there? Perhaps we should fight against you all? After all, we were the first to inhabit this coast! No, there's no need to fight. All we want to do is catch fish as we were doing two thousand years ago. For justice is what is given us by the sea and by God.

Then you are a real Hegelian! You justify all that exists. Everything real is reasonable, is it not? Andrei was in high spirits. He had not felt like this for a long time, so gay and carefree. Life had a fresh allure. Damn it all, there were plenty of wonderful things in the world besides justice. There was the sea, for instance, there was wine, old men, tipsy conversation! So, Signor Luludaki, you justify any reality? I don't understand what you have been saying. But no matter what you say, I justify it. Yes, yes, I justify it! Justify, justify, justify!

And the Greek, his old, porous sponge-like tawny face quivering with laughter, raised his hands and administered some kind of blessing. Andrei stared at him joyfully. He was beginning to like old man more and more. What an agreeable, affable exploiter of hired labour! And no fool either. These old men who had lived difficult lives and managed to make something out of them were by no means stupid. Dear Monsieur Luludaki, about thirty years ago when you were just a simple fisherman, did it not seem to you then that everything in the world was wonderful? But then you paid out sixty-five rubles and bought the certificate of a member of the second guild—did you not?—and after that you decided that the world had become a little better. Then you paid an additional two hundred and fifty rubles and became a merchant of the

first guild, a wholesaler, and now you are quite certain that the world is in splendid order.

Andrei laughed and the old man poured more wine and said sadly, "No, my affairs bear no relation to my thoughts. I speak from the experience of a long life. I lost my wife. Twelve years ago. She was younger than me, a beautiful Russian woman. Was that just? One of my sons was killed in Serbia, the other is living in Petersburg and has forgotten me. In my old age I am as lonely as Job. Is that just? I devoted all my life to my children, and now I have none. This wine, by the way, is what they supply to the Livadia Palace. I know the supplier, he's a friend of mine. And I'm telling you, there is no justice! It doesn't exist in nature. So how, may I ask you, is it possible to fight for something that doesn't exist?"

They continued their conversation the next morning. The old man accompanied him to the mail coach station, chattering away and telling some by no means stupid stories. They parted firm friends and with a farewell embrace.

Andrei's father turned pale on learning that his son had stayed with the fishmonger and talked with him all night. That old toad was connected with the police! He had been trying to pump him about Andrei all the time, not for himself, of course, but on instructions, and damn it, if he hadn't spotted Andrei and caught him nicely. "Ah, what a misfortune!" his father mumbled distractedly. "Now we'll have the police round. That's not a nice thing to happen in front of Gospodin Nelidov...." And sure enough, the district police officer arrived not next day but the day after. He was very stern. "Why didn't you come and report your arrival? As you are well aware, a person in your position must make his presence known within two days, and no later. What do you intend to do here?" Andrei said that he had come to help his father with the spring farm work, and would then start teaching. To this the officer responded sullenly, "We shall see about that. You have to have permission."

Father was badly frightened, mother was weeping quietly to herself and only Uncle Pavel, father's brother, who had aged a lot and become almost a hunchback, cast crafty glances at Andrei and winked conspiratorially, as much as to say, "We're a pair of daredevils, you and me, we're a cut above them!" In his youth Uncle Pavel had run away from the landowner to whom he had belonged as a serf and wandered all over the

country, almost as far as Siberia. He had been adopted by a peasant and peddled for him, then he was discovered because he had no passport, and was brought back to his owner in chains. One of Andrei's childhood memories was of landlord Nelidov stamping his foot at Uncle Pavel and shouting, "Off to Siberia, with the scoundrel!" Father was frightened to death, but Uncle Pavel didn't flinch. It wouldn't be the first time he'd been in prison, he said, and he knew what it was to wear chains too. In those days he used to be the cook, but now he was whiling away his days in the kitchen. This wretched, servile life—father might be manager of the estate but he still hadn't shed his servility—had weighed on Andrei even as a child, but now it was quite unbearable. He saw Nelidov twice. The landowner had grown incredibly stout, probably from some disease or other, and could hardly walk with such a huge, swaying belly. At least he had done one good thing, he had explained to Andrei how to read ordinary books and not just the Church script that he had learned from his grandfather, and had read him Pushkin's the "Tale of the Fisherman and the Golden Fish". He had taken Andrei to Kerch, where he had been living at the time, and put him into the parish school, from which Andrei later moved on to the district gymnasium. In fact, it was Nelidov who had given the first push to Andrei's education. And embedded in his heart for ever, along with love for his grandfather, pity for his mother and sympathy for his weak-spirited father, was a sense of gratitude towards this big man with his round shining pate and loud voice. He always smelled of a fragrant tobacco, a watch-chain dangled on his belly, and he would take you powerfully by the arm and lead you along, that it made you catch your breath....

Now they stood and stared at each other in a mutual effort of recall and recognition. But there was no response. A very fat, old man with a loose lip and laboured, rasping breathing stared at Andrei with a cold, disease-racked stare. He stared for a long time, then said, "I regret that I ever taught you to read," turned on his heel and walked away. Andrei first saw him when he was setting off for Kashka-Chekrak to see his grandfather. His father had harnessed the horses and was going to take him himself; he was glad his son was leaving. Nelidov came up to the britzka and said, "People like you make one hate all the best that Russia gained from the reforms!"

And there was genuine hatred in his eyes. Andrei was taken aback and surprise left him without an answer. What was there to say? Besides he had caught a glimpse of his father cringing as if in expectation of a blow. Only later did he realise the reason. It was the beginning of April and news had just come of Zasulich's acquittal.

How strangely everything had changed. Nelidov, by no means a despot, on the contrary, an easy-going soft-hatted liberal, who had been doing direct good now eyed him wolfishly with blind hatred, whereas Lorentsov, that brute and rapist, whom Andrei had once wanted to kill, greeted him and talked to him in quite an affable way. But then the old blockhead was still not interested in anything but women and drinking. He probably never read the papers anyway. The trip to Kashka-Chekrak left Andrei despondent. Grandfather was near to death, lonely and unhappy. Grandmother had died long ago. The old man was passing his last days in the same little hut in the poultry yard, treated like a wretched beggar or an old dog that could not be chased away and it would have been a pity to kill. Grandfather's daughter-in-law and her new man—her real husband, grandad's son, had disappeared some seven years ago, Andrei remembered him well—spurned and harassed the old man, making him work beyond his strength and waiting for him to die so that they could take possession of the hut. They gave him nothing to eat. Sometimes Auntie Lyuba sent him a pittance from Kiev, where she was in service, and occasionally Andrei's mother visited him and brought him a few things.

Andrei remembered his grandfather as a tall, sturdy old man with a bushy grey beard and healthy colour. He used to walk slowly and talk in a grave, unhurried manner, somehow very proud and dignified. He was always rustling through the ancient heavily bound books of the Old Believers and, according to the family legend, had read the whole Bible twice through. It was he who had taught Andrei to read the books of the church and made him learn the Psalter by heart. During their walks in the mountains or to the forest for firewood grandad would say, "Now then, young Frolov, psalm number so and so!" And the little Frolov would rattle it off without a stop, although there was much that he didn't understand. He liked reciting the psalms because it all sounded so strange and fervent, and sometimes a little frightening: "With Thee we

shall gore our enemies, in Thy name shall we spurn them...." And grandad always called him young Frolov, little Frolov, never Andrei. He was pround of his Frolov blood!

Later he often thought of grandad, remembering all kinds of things about him. The old man had been the living answer to a question that had been hope, a torment and a mystery to him all his life: the Russian muzhik, what is he? If only he could really understand Gavrila Frolov, he would be able to understand himself, Andrei Zhelyabov. There was the root and its branches went down to a great depth drawing their sap from the dark aeons of time. Where had it come from, this inconquerable pride of Gavrila Frolov's? He remembered it with astonishment. After all, grandad had been a serf, a slave for many generations. All his pride should have been thrashed out of him long ago and scattered like chaff. He had been the lowest of the low, a mere menial! One of the manor serfs of the landowner Stein (Andrei's other grandfather, Zhelyabov, had been one of the same landowner's chattels). The landowner and his retainers had travelled the long road from Kostroma Province to the Crimea in old-fashioned style, with frequent lengthy halts, and somewhere in the Kherson country or near Poltava Gavrila had come across a free Cossack woman, Akulina Timofeyevna, who had become Andrei's grandmother. In the Crimea, as granny used to say, landowner Stein had "gone bankrupt" and sold his serfs to the first bidder, giving others away in his daughters' dowries. And this was how the Zhelyabov family had come to Nelidov and the Frolovs to the Greeks, first to Lampsi and then to Lorentsov. When she was cross with grandad, granny would always complain either in jest or with true bitterness, "What ever made me marry into slavery?" And grandad would tease her and call her a coward. What kind of a Cossack was she when she was as timid as a mouse. "Heh, Akoolya, where you coom from?" he would say teasingly. And it was a fact that granny lived in constant fear and expectation of disaster and would creep to the window of an evening, watching for any sign of the terrible Poltora-Dmitry, the bailiff and spy.

But all that had been a long time ago.

Grandmother was dead. Poltora-Dmitry had had his head smashed in and also died long ago, and grandad, withered and thinfaced, with a beard that was no longer white but a scanty yellow, lay on a crude plank bed, awaiting death. "Can you get

up?" "I can." He rose slowly, covering his shoulders with his old long-skirted coat of reddish camelhair, staggered out on to the porch, and stood there swaying; his legs were giving way under him but he still managed to stand and would accept no help. Only the pride was left in this decrepit body. Andrei felt his heart contract with pity, and one day, not knowing what to do, he rushed out of the hut and, seeing the daughter-in-law's husband, seized him and shook him frenziedly. "If you ever do anything to my old man ... you dog!" The fellow was stunned with terror and fell to the ground. But what could one do about death and old age? "I am poured out as water, all my bones have scattered...."

Andrei spent more than a month with the old man, worked in the fields, talked in the evenings and thought at night. He felt that a change was taking place in his life, a barely perceptible but tremendous change. Just as the stars all turn together in summer and, unless you are watching closely, you may never notice it happening, but if you stop and watch and think, then you will. Everything had somehow shifted, slipped, and the stars that had been in the ascendant had now declined to the horizon, and others had risen with a new brilliance. The hopes of imminent rebellion that Bakunin had voiced—the poor man had never lived to see anything but the wretched Chigirin affair—those hopes had collapsed. The brigands? The sectarians? The free Cossacks? It was all tight shut and fast asleep, or preoccupied with the petty hatreds of the passing day. The rebels, who had acclaimed brigands the true revolutionaries, who had dreamed of a new Pugachev and roamed the forests in the hope of meeting a gang of cut-throats that they could mould to their purposes with the help of Proudhon, had faded ingloriously out of the picture. Some were in prison, others abroad and others had gone home. The brigands went on robbing ordinary folk in their own small way, the sectarians gathered in their coteries and cursed the official church and its priests, and the free Cossacks rode in pursuit of students and suppressed demonstrations. It had all degenerated from the force it once was into impotence. What about the Russian commune? Grandad Gavrila Frolov with his memories of the assemblies of the *mir,* the eternal truth of the *mir*? "You may be at the back but you're in the pack. Get left behind and you've lost your own kind." Yes, such a thing had existed and it was preserved in legend, in the precious experience of the

past: the age-old Slav council, the free talking shop, the right of each and every man to speak his mind, the famous *veche* that had astonished the Byzantians, Russia's supreme good that had been crushed under the Tatar heel and yet had survived that onslaught and been reborn as a powerful republic with a bell in the market-place that everyone had the right to ring, to demand justice and counsel, and then had once again been torn to pieces by Russia's own scoundrels. The peasant commune, so the historians said, was a fragment of a lost paradise, of the ancient Russian freedom. For some reason the people had kept the memory of it alive. So should they, when the great day came, return to their ideal, to a life of law and truth. But just as the old popular form of government had proved too weak of muscle to resist Ivan's iron fist, so was the commune too weak—phantasmally weak!—to be relied on in the struggle with the autocracy. It was but a shadow of the past, a museum for the keeping of forgotten customs and sorrowful dreams.

And no one wanted anything else! Andrei had talked a lot to a clever and practical-minded peasant about history, about rebellions and the origin of serfdom, and when he read him an article from *Notes of the Fatherland* about the present-day village kulaks who were robbing the peasants and sucking their blood, the man had suddenly grown furious, "It's not true! They're envious that the peasant is beginning to stand on his own feet, that's why they invent all these things about him!" The man knew very well that the author of the article was right, and he himself had complained of the local grab-all, but the article had contained a hint about rebellion and this had at once roused his opposition. Yakov, the daughter-in-law's man, with whom Andrei had gradually become friendly and to whom he had explained about the land and the honest way to divide it—according to the number of mouths one had to feed—had burst out joyfully, "It'd be a great thing to own some more land! Then I'd hire a couple of workmen!..." And what was the philosopher Lavrov advocating? The slow preparation of the people for social reorganisation, the moulding of critically-minded individuals? That was no good either because it let things drag on for so long, for countless generations. But to wait any longer was beyond all patience! All that was finest in the country was perishing, the people were running to seed, growing dull and indifferent, and

a terrible threat was growing up in the shape of the kulak in the village and the capitalist in the town. Long ago, when there had been only a hint of the danger, Turgenev had said that the Russian peasant in his sheepskin carried the seeds of a bourgeoisie. They would gobble up the commune, would those sheepskins. They would tear the country apart, piece by piece, if they had the chance. It was no good hoping for intellectual forces to save the commune from the bloodsuckers, because when would this slow ant-like groping ever take effect in competition with such attack, such agility; these Russian Germans could establish themselves in the space of weeks, not years. Yakov and the daughter-in-law had bought a share in Lorentsov's poultry farm and were already selling eggs and bird meat at Kerch. To another peasant, also a former serf, Lorentsov had sold part of his land, a barren stretch of hills and gulleys, but this fellow had thought of the idea of quarrying stone and his enterprise had flourished; the labour was as good as free, tramps and beggars from all over Russia drifted south for the warmth, and the sea with its means of transport was near. In two years he had grown fabulously rich. Yes, something had to be done quickly! Or it would be all up with Russia.

While living with his grandfather in Kashka-Chekrak, Andrei had been unable to form any clear idea of what was happening in the country. Later, in June, when he met his friends in Odessa and read the papers, he realised that many were gripped with excitement and alarm. Everyone—revolutionaries and guardians of the law—was longing for some fast and decisive action. In February, yet another police spy—Nikonov, in Rostov—had been put to death. And there had been attempts on the life of the public prosecutor Kotlyarevsky. In March, the Izbitsky brothers in Kiev had offered armed resistance when arrested. In May, an officer of the gendarmes, Baron Heiking, was stabbed to death in the street, and at the end of the month the Chigirin rebels—Stefanovich, Deutsch and Bokhanovsky—made a spectacular escape from prison in Kiev. But this only made the authorities more ruthless. In April, there was a mass banishment of students from Kiev, without trial or investigation. They were simply rounded up and sent north, and when they were being marched through Moscow they were taken by a route that ensured they were brutally beaten up by the street traders of the Okhotny Ryad. On May 9th, His Imperial

Majesty decreed that crimes against persons in official positions were no longer to be tried by jury (a fast and furious answer to the acquittal of Zasulich!) but brought before the Chambers of Justice, the Special Court of the Senate and the Supreme Criminal Court. And the following month, on June 9th, saw yet another great act of benevolence: the institution of village constables was introduced.

And yet Andrei still could not make the final resolve to throw in his lot with those who saw salvation in terrorism, in a war to the knife with the authorities. There was nothing else: only the feeling that a war to the knife was no solution. Such methods could decide Russia's future only for days or months, not for years, for centuries. When he said goodbye to grandad, the old man mustered his strength and came a long way to see Andrei off, as far as the hillock overlooking the post road, where at one time, it seemed centuries ago, Andrei and grandmother used to wait for grandad to come from town. Nothing had changed. The hot green plain still stretched away below them, already browned by the fierce spring sun—in a month it would all be burned yellow—and the road still wound over the low hills and their hazy tops faded into a pale dimness. The sky blazed with grey heat, the crickets were buzzing, and a cart was crawling along far below. Here was the beginning of his road and now he must say good-bye to all this. He knew that he would never return. But this world that he was leaving was fresh, sun-soaked, indifferent and invincible. Grandad suddenly said, "For not in my bow do I put my trust, nor shall my sword save me...."

All through the long day that followed, as he tramped across the hills, then the steppe, he thought of these half-forgotten words and in his mind agreed with them. But his heart was restless, "Whence cometh the word, if not from bow and sword?" The old man was leaving this world in tranquility. His justice was there, beyond earth's borders. But what should a man do who had not the faintest hope of ever going *there* and whose life had only one purpose—to obtain justice *here*? No, he could see nothing but the sun's glare, the dusty road dotted with sheep droppings, and could feel nothing but the heat, the sweat that ran stickily into his eyes, the pain in his feet and the desire to reach the mail coach station as soon as possible.

Mitya Zheltonovsky, an old friend, the only survivor of the

Volkhovsky circle—he had been arrested and cross-questioned but had managed to avoid the trial and they had let him go for lack of evidence—had invited Andrei to his village near Bratslav, to work on his melon-field. They had reached the hard core of the summer. Odessa was dying, suffocating in the sultriness of hot stone and limestone dust. Olga and little Andrei were living with the family in Gorodishche and she, of course, refused to go to Bratslav with him. "How will you be able to feed us? We're living on charity as it is, but at least it's with our own folk...." The jibe contained a bitter truth; he couldn't have fed them. "Andrei, when will this end?" She was almost crying. "Where is your conscience? You shouldn't have started a family if you don't want to live with us. Andrei, dear, after all, I married a student of law, not a melon-field labourer. I've had two years in your Nikolayevka and that was enough; it's just impossible...." The inevitable happened. He went off to Zheltonovsky. The work on the melon-field turned out to be hell. Sixteen hours a day, in the full heat of the sun, tending the oxen, fetching water, watering, hoeing, humping loads on his back. As for the propagandising among the peasants that Andrei had hoped to do and Mitya had used as a bait, there was neither strength nor time. In the evenings, when the heat abated, the biggest job began—the watering; and by night-time he could barely stand. Mitya worked just as hard, except that he would sometimes run off for an hour or two to his wife Olga, who lay for days on end on the veranda, tormented by some disease. She was a kind and patient woman with that specially clear and tranquil gaze that Andrei had noticed often in the daughters of village priests, and even the fatal illness that was killing her had not made her cross and sullen. She was always pitying Andrei. "You poor dear! How can you live all alone like this? I couldn't bear to be without Mitya for a single day...." Andrei would smile wryly. "That's what my Olga used to say. But, as you see, she managed well enough without me."

Olga, Mitya's wife, had developed consumption in prison. She, too, had spent nearly a year in custody on a charge of belonging to an illegal society and distributing forbidden books. Her "godfather" had been Ivan Lobkovsky, who had betrayed many people, including Anya Makarevich. Mitya did not like his wife to recall the past, especially her prison experiences, but sometimes Olga and Andrei wanted to talk—about Anya, for example, with whom Olga had been

friendly. They took any opportunity that offered to do so. This quiet, clear-eyed woman had led a fairly exciting life. In her youth she had married her teacher at the Kamenets-Podolsk gymnasium. It had been a fictitious marriage but she had grown to love him. He had gone off to America some seven years ago with a group of socialists who wanted to set up a farming commune on the Fourier model. He had promised to bring his wife over later, but had been killed when a friend accidentally shot him while cleaning his rifle. The communards were tried and acquitted, but their commune collapsed and nearly all of them returned to Russia, penniless and disillusioned in Fourier. Meanwhile Olga, in about 1873, had drifted into Felix's study circle. At that time Mitya Zheltonovsky had been an energetic member of the circle, used to bring out a handwritten magazine called *Forward,* and travelled regularly to Kiev to set up contacts with the Kiev and Petersburg circles. Olga also found work to do and translated into Ukrainian Erckmann-Shatrian's *The Story of a Peasant.* But after the police round-ups of 1874, the endless interrogations of Mitya, and Olga's imprisonment, which had ruined her health, both of them had withdrawn from the movement, Olga because of her rapidly advancing illness and Mitya because he had lost hope of success and was embittered.

He related that the year before, when they had been preparing to get Kostyurin out of the Odessa Gendarmerie's barracks where he was being held, an argument had arisen between himself and Frolenko. It had never gone as far as an open quarrel but they had taken a dislike to each other. It seemed to worry Mitya and when he talked about it he did so as if asking for approval. At that time, in the spring of 1877, Mitya had been the only Odessa comrade of Kostyurin's still at liberty, so it was to him that Alyosha Popovich sent his messages begging for help in making an escape. Mitya got in touch with two daring young fellows, Popko and Frolenko. They started making a plan, but things developed rather slowly. Kostyurin grew impatient and implored Mitya to hurry. The first conflict arose while they were still discussing the plan. Suppose the sentry proved troublesome? Get rid of him! "You mean, you won't stop at bloodshed?" Both were very calm, "And what would you have us do?" "No, my friends, I can't join you in that!" Mitya thought they would let him alone after such a statement, as was the custom among men of

honour, but a little while later the crafty Frolenko appeared and, without batting an eyelid, said, "We've just got to get fifty rubles somewhere." Mitya asked whether it was for the cause or to live on. Frolenko hesitated, looked embarrassed, then confessed that it was to live on. Mitya refused the money, but later he learned that Anya Makarevich had turned up and obtained two hundred rubles; Frolenko had hired a horse in Tatersal and the escape had succeeded famously.

The subject of bloodshed was a sore point with Mitya. In his wife's presence he restrained himself but, when alone with Andrei, he talked about it heatedly. He was utterly shocked by the murder of Heiking. To lie in wait and then stab to death a defenceless person in the street—and for what? Just because he wore the uniform of an officer of the gendarmes? The baron was said to have been a man of quite moderate views, not the worst type of gendarme anyway. It was even rumoured that he had warned some of the revolutionaries of the possibility of their arrest, and his wife was a liberal lady in the full sense of the term. And yet this was the man they had murdered. Well, of course, he was easy prey. And yet what a fuss the comrades had made about it, even issued a special proclamation stamped by the Executive Committee. And who had done the killing? Popko, the gentle "Parisian", Popko, who was reputed never to have hurt a fly. The horrible thing about it was that murder and bloodshed were becoming something quite ordinary, part of the everyday life of the Russian free-thinker.... And what about Ivan Ivichevich? Mitya had seen him in spring in Kiev. It was Ivan who had killed the traitor Nikonov in Rostov-on-Don. He had brought him down with a revolver shot in the street, then shot him through the head. Not without reason. The scoundrel had betrayed a good many comrades. But the way Ivan had described it afterwards! In such a gay, matter-of-fact way and with such a swagger, as if it had been not murder but some gay hussar's prank. And it was then, in Kiev, when he had listened to the bragging of the Ivichevich brothers, Ivan and Ignat, that Mitya had realised this was where he drew the line. He had had enough, what with his own ruined life and Olga having to pay the price with such a terrible illness, and now there *was going to be a bloodbath.*

Andrei knew the Ivicheviches from his Odessa days. They were real daredevils, scatter-brained young men, but charming in their valour and readiness to kill or be killed at any moment

or go off on some reckless spree. On the day when the uprising began people like the Ivicheviches would be invaluable! But now, of course, they were, odd men out, birds of rather rare and frightening plumage.

"You're hoping for a bloodless revolution?" Andrei would ask. "Oh, no!" Mitya would cry. "But I reject bloodshed without revolution!"

At the beginning of August his Olga took a sudden turn for the worse. Mitya rushed off to fetch various doctors, first to Bratslav, then to Odessa, for a good German doctor someone had recommended. The German, though by no means old, was corpulent and short-winded, the type usually known as "apoplectic". He must have been extremely eager to earn money if he had agreed to travel such a distance in such heat by cart. He brought with him a remedy based on honey, but Olga was too far gone. Mitya did everything he could. He looked like a corpse himself. His tan had vanished, leaving him grey-faced; he could scarcely think properly. Andrei talked to the doctor and Mitya sat by in a kind of trance, sometimes asking totally irrelevant questions. Suddenly he burst into tears, muttering, "I know this is for my sins! It's God's punishment...." They paid the German eighty rubles. He insisted on going back at once without staying the night because he was worried about his family, "*Die schrekliche Zeiten* in our dear city of Odessa!" Over supper he told all kinds of terrible stories. Odessa was overflowing with revolutionaries. They had all come pouring in last July, from everywhere, from other cities, even from abroad; they were preparing to stage an uprising during the trial of one of their leaders, Ivan Kovalsky, a famous brigand. A lady of the doctor's acquaintance had seen with her own eyes a whole crowd of newly-arrived revolutionaries walking down Staroportofrankovskaya Street from the station. They were all armed with several daggers and revolvers apiece. Troops had been brought into the city, three companies of Bashkirs and a Cossack regiment. When sentence was passed on Kovalsky, the crowd in the street was waiting impatiently. Someone shouted, "Sentenced to death!" and a real revolution broke out. Shouting, shooting! The doctor had heard it himself and seen people running and pursued by Cossacks. He lived in Luteransky Street and the trial and the incidents that followed took place in Gulevaya Street. He had forbidden the members of his family to go out

for two days. A young girl in her teens, so they said, had been seen on the boulevards, calling on people in public to break into the prison and free the criminals. It was *die wirkliche Revolution*! The police had tried to seize her but the crowd wouldn't let them. The Russian revolution was really rather *wild und barbarisch*. These brigands with their daggers, children on the barricades, the Cossacks with their long lances. An innocent person could be killed for no reason at all. The whole family had stayed at home for two days in fear and trembling, living on cheese and biscuits; it had been terrible. A country that could not ensure the safety of its citizens could not claim to belong to Europe.

With this declaration the German rode off in his cart. Mitya said, "He didn't mention the main thing. The day after Ivan's execution, the day before yesterday, Mezentsev, the Chief of the Gendarmerie, was killed, stabbed in the street in Petersburg." Andrei jumped to his feet. "Who did it?"

"That's of no interest to me!"

And Mitya again began to weep and say that fate was punishing him for his sins. What sins? He loved Olga too much, more than any man should love a woman. In September, Olga Razumovskaya, by her first husband Romanko-Romanovskaya, and by her second, Zheltonovskaya, died at the age of twenty-five. Up to the very last day she kept those clear eyes, despite her sufferings. One day, when Mitya was out, she suddenly asked Andrei, "What has my life been for?" He thought for a moment to give an honest answer. "I believe it is like this; besides material and spiritual wealth the human race creates something else, something intangible, incalculable. Perhaps it's conscience in the highest sense. No, not conscience, but some derivative of conscience. And this is indestructible, it accumulates, and it will always be where man is. And people will draw upon it."

She smiled. "Won't they have any of their own?"

"Possibly they will...."

"Dear Grisha! (She called him Grisha, as he used to be called in the Odessa workers' study groups, where they had first met.) You talk to me like a teacher to little children. But thank you all the same."

The next day he had to go to the market at Bratslav to sell the melons and water-melons. Mitya would stay with Olga. He was sorry for Mitya. Otherwise he would have left him and his

melon-field and made tracks for Odessa. Obviously, events were coming to a head. Poor Ivan! So Mezentsev had been punished! The gendarme chief had paid the penalty for his zeal. It was he who had insisted on making the sentences harsher in the Big Trial. So none of the executioners, no matter how high his position, could escape vengeance. Andrei was convinced that Mezentsev's assassination would lead to fierce and immediate reprisals, and these in their turn would lead—and so on without end. As in a forest fire, when an oak is struck by lightning and catches fire, scores of trees all round blaze with it. In Bratslav his conjecture was confirmed. The authorities had replied with a decree that all political murders and acts of violence were to be tried by court martial as in wartime. They had decided to quell fire with fire.

In October, Andrei returned to Odessa physically exhausted and totally disillusioned. As a propagandist he had simply wasted three and a half months. Life in the country meant work of the most laborious kind, work that turned a man into a beast of burden because there was no strength left for human things. He was at a dead-end. Olga's death and Mitya's demented grief were a profound and sorrowful confirmation of the fact, his life had come to a standstill. He arrived in Odessa almost penniless, having given the grief-stricken Mitya all that they had made out of the melon-field. There was nowhere else to go, so he went home. Although what kind of a home was it? All summer Olga had not sent him a single letter, not one word. He did not go up at once to the two rooms in Gulevaya Street, on the corner of Degtyarnaya, where he had once lived and known a few hours of youthful joy. The place looked strange, forbidding; everything there was thickening into a sickly unnecessary mess. He looked down the street. It was just the same as usual. Stone-masons in their working clothes, carpenters with their tools, painters with their brushes and pails were making their way as usual at this early hour towards the centre of the city. They always came from Moldavanka through Gulevaya Street. And went back the same way in the evening, except for a stop at Prokudinsky's "China" tavern—over there near the building of the district military court. And that was where it had all happened, near that big building. The Bashkirs must have blocked the exit to Cathedral Square and opened fire. Two people had been killed. Later he was told more about the girl who had spoken on the boulevard

that evening of July 24th, when Ivan's sentence had been announced. Her name was Viktoria Gukovskaya. She had jumped on to a bench and shouted to the crowd, "While you enjoy yourselves strolling about here in the evening, your comrades are being condemned to death and hard labour for trying to secure your freedom, your welfare!" A policeman had pulled her off the bench but she had broken free and run away. The city governor Levashov had issued an order for the arrest of the criminal (she was only fourteen years old!) and appeals to assist the police in detaining her were put up all over the city. Ivan was shot at dawn on August 2nd. Viktoria Gukovskaya was arrested twelve days later. At the end of the summer several others were arrested: Lizogub, Chubarov, and the Popko whom Mitya had talked about so resentfully. Yes, life here was a swirling mass of dark, electrically charged storm-clouds. The atmosphere was oppressive and everything seemed to presage a great and cathartic disaster.

When Andrei entered the room, Olga did not rise from the table at which she was sewing. She looked up with a kind of spiteful mockery. "Had a good time? You look fine—sunburnt, slim. And the beard suits you...." He asked if she had been in town at the time of Ivan's trial. "I don't remember, it didn't interest me much. I think I was at Lyalya's in Gorodishche." He left her all the money he had brought with him, about two hundred rubles, and went off to Moldavanka where, either in the little flat shared by Vasya and Mikola, or in the hut where Makar Teterka lived, the friends he was longing to see would be expecting him. Later he would return to Gulevaya, live with Olga and his son for a few days, and even go visiting with Olga, usually to Semenyuta's, where he borrowed books; but there was no warmth in these visits, it was merely a way of passing the time. If he had nowhere to spend the night he would go home. Otherwise he might disappear for a week. Both of them realised the end was near, like an old man's death. He told her nothing and introduced her to nobody, and she asked no questions.

And now he was thinking of what she had said, "You never loved me." It was not true. The student rebel, the young man always ready for a scrap or a good time, who found everything so easy and life so worth living, who had never seen the inside

of a prison, grief, the death of his friends, who had no beard and did not yet know the true hatred that transforms a man—he had loved her. But it was no use trying to prove it now. It was no good saying, "A different man stands before you, you are speaking to the wrong person." The only thing he could do was to save her and her son from a fate they had not deserved.

"You don't want anything except your awful life...."

"No, I want a lot more than that. But you can't give it to me. So we must separate, on a perfectly legal basis, and in future neither of us will have anything to do with each other...." She was crying but he went on in the same tone. "There are thousands of reasons for annulling our marriage. The Anya Rosenstein affair, for one. Not to mention the fact that I am not providing for you."

"Oh, I don't care! I want nothing of you!" she cried and their little son, frightened by this outburst, ran in from the next room.

After that, for some reason, they went to see his father-in-law in Yekaterininskaya Street. Olga had urged him to go and he had agreed without really knowing why. He must have felt very sorry for her. She had been darting about the room, muttering nonsensical phrases. "Daddy will advise us.... About what you're trying to do..." she muttered. "In any case he wanted to speak to you." What about? All right, then, let's go. On the way he had a feeling that he shouldn't be going. This was quite the wrong thing for him, but he walked on and even took his son's hand. As always in such moments of foreboding, he could not stop himself and pressed on to the end. It was almost a year since he had visited this house. A new iron railing had appeared round the house and there was a brass plate on one of the square columns of the porch; the new Carcel lamps in the vestibule were an expensive novelty from St. Petersburg. A servant they had never seen before, the portly Garpina, in a cap and apron with Ukrainian embroidery, informed Olga that the master was in the dining room taking supper with his guests.

Yes, that was the unpleasant thing—guests! Andrei's face darkened. He had no relish for mixing with people of Yakhnenko's circle, no matter how liberal-minded they were. Meaningless talk, unnecessary tension and strain on the will; you couldn't say what you thought, so either you had to sit

quiet like a stuffed dummy or keep up the senseless conversation.

There were three guests: a distant relative of Yakhnenko's the landowner Lehman and his wife, who lived in St. Petersburg, and Geraltovsky, a journalist on the *Odessa Messenger* with whom Andrei had a nodding acquaintance. Andrei sometimes called on the *Messenger.* In the old days it had been to give them the chronicle of student life. Lately he had been calling in to see some of the printers he knew and also when he was visiting Semenyuta, who had a flat in the same building as the editorial office. Geraltovsky belonged to the following of Baron X, the *Messenger*'s satirist, but Andrei had nothing but contempt for this celebrity, regarded him as a windbag and extended his contempt to all his "tails and aglets", in other words, his hangers-on. Geraltovsky's pettiness showed itself when Andrei was introduced and this little ginger-moustached cockroach, with whom he had once had tea and chatted in the buffet, pretended not to know him. But what did that matter! It was all so untimely. Even his father-in-law made the introductions in a kind of hasty fashion with his mother-in-law looking on coldly and barely nodding. Tasya, Olga's sister, still unmarried and noticeably faded, smiled maliciously as much as to say, What on earth made you come here?

There was some talk about the war and the Congress of Berlin. Indignant remarks were made, as usual, over the shedding of Russian blood for the benefit of the English queen and the Austrians. The lack of "minds" in Russian diplomacy and the higher civil service was as usual deplored (Geraltovsky, "Just imagine what a pile Disraeli would have made if the English had won such victories and made such sacrifices as we, poor sinners!"). The conversation then drifted from Berlin and Bismarck to Kaiser Wilhelm, against whom there had been two assassination attempts within the year. The tinsmith Hödel had shot at him in May, and in June Doctor Nobiling had inflicted several serious wounds on the Emperor.

It was a kind of world-wide epidemic and we, Russians, were, of course, the first to pick up any infection. "It's all stirred up by the International!" was Lehman's confident explanation. Yakhnenko said that he had it on good authority that neither Doctor Nobiling nor the tinsmith were socialists. But it was the socialists who had suffered. Andrei's father-in-law looked even more like Shevchenko, the Ukrainian national

poet; he was even balder, his whiskers more drooping, his eyes more sorrowful. Fixing his mournful gaze on Andrei, he expressed the opinion—speaking quietly; he looked unwell—that the German example ought to make any thinking individual pause to reflect. What was there to show for these two attempts? Nothing but trouble. The harsh law against the socialists passed by the Reichstag a fortnight ago—there's your net gain!

"Yes, it's abominable!" Geraltovsky joined in. "Typical German blimpishness...."

"Forgive me, Dominik Frantsevich, but what is it that you find abominable?" Lehman inquired, colouring up, and his big flabby face with its pendulant lips assumed an expression of puzzlement and distaste. "I am surprised to hear it. They have found a reasonable business-like solution that we, Russians, can only envy. This power of reason, this iron Bismarckian firmness is just what we lack, if you want to know. Instead of taking firm measures we rely on persuasion and exhortation. But whom do we seek to persuade? A criminal rabble, madmen who ought to be put in straightjackets or in prison."

"A little more than exhortation, I think," Yakhnenko demurred chuckling. "We're not quite so starry-eyed as that."

He looked at Andrei and almost seemed to wink. He was not a bad old fellow; Andrei would be sorry to part with him. For some reason Andrei felt that the whole conversation was directed at him, which was nonsense, of course. Geraltovsky had only a vague notion of who he was, and Lehman, a rare visitor to the city, had none at all. He should never have come here. The ladies were twittering away at the other end of the room; the men continued their argument, becoming more and more heated. Geraltovsky, quite the liberal little devil, was attacking Lehman spiritedly.

"So what you want, Georgy Georgiyevich, is a return to ramrod floggings? The gagging of public opinion? Preliminary censorship, and so on?"

"Gentlemen, you really must free yourselves of the power of words! Russia is dying of verbiage. What am I talking about? As everyone here knows, I am a monarchist. I have boundless respect for the ruling monarch because he opened such great horizons for Russia—but! But, gentlemen! I hope there are no agents of the Third Section here?" he smiled round at everyone, allowing his glance to rest on Andrei. "These nervous tremors,

this hysteria and idiotic dithering that begin whenever we have to deal with our political opponents! Where is dignity? Where is the firm, unswerving will? The government's recent appeal to the public, this pitiful prayer for help in the fight against subversion that we were treated to on August 20th—it's a howling disgrace! A huge empire with half the world bowing and trembling before it, with a great army, secret police, gaols, fortresses, penal prisons, Siberia, such an empire begs the unarmed public for help. Why, it makes you want to spit! What, in heaven's name, is this, gentlemen! It would be hard to think of anything more destructive of faith and respect for authority."

"But I see it quite differently," Yakhnenko said. "In my view this is the wisest step that has been taken for many years. Only the combined efforts of the government and the public can bring us salvation. And only trust in the power of public reason! We may be backward, provincial people, there may be some things we don't understand...."

"I am wholly on your side, Semyon Stepanovich!" Geraltovsky broke in excitedly again. "If people had the freedom to form public organisations they would unhesitatingly join their efforts with those of the government. But they can't! Their hands are tied!"

"Forgive me but the government has enough forces...."

"Georgi Georgiyevich, there is a vacuum between the government and the public. A vacuum, you understand?" Agitatedly Geraltovsky drew figures in the air to portray the government, the public and the vacuum between them. "And that vacuum has been filled by nihilism from the West. Don't you see what has happened? Nature abhors a vacuum."

"The vacuum you speak of is the absence of strong government. The lack of confidence is universal, from top to bottom!" Lehman snapped crossly. "Here are some of the latest facts. An old acquaintance of mine, a person of perfectly good intentions but rather difficult to get on with and therefore always in trouble at work, spent a lot of time trying to obtain an audience with Alexander Yegorovich Timashev. He wrote petitions, he threatened, he implored and in the end his wish was granted. When he entered the minister's office, the minister walked straight towards him, threw open his uniform tunic and said, 'Shoot! I'm not afraid of anyone! You're not the first to threaten me and you won't be the last. I can show

you a whole sackful of threatening letters.' My acquaintance was utterly shocked. He had been taken for a nihilist, even a gunman. But what behaviour for the Minister of the Interior? Throwing open his tunic and asking to be shot! Quite honestly, gentlemen, I was flabbergasted by this story. What a degree of flabbiness, of confusion must they have reached if the Minister of the Interior, the chief guardian of law and order, and considered to be a hard-liner at that, goes in for such antics! What, in that case, are we to expect from our other guardians? The mind boggles! Things have gone too far."

Even Andrei was interested in this story and he decided that he had not been wasting his time. It was strange that he should have remained calm for so long, as if the contestants in this argument were speaking of something that had nothing to do with him. Usually he could not bear to be a mere listener and would rush into the thick of the fight. But now he was in a special position. He had come here for Olga's sake.... And in all probability for the last time in his life.

Meanwhile the men's voices grew louder and the ladies, abandoning their talk of the rotundas, began to lend an ear. Madam Lehman, tall, pale, very *Petersburg* lady with a kind of concave, inexpressive face—her chin and forehead protruded and everything between them, including the little Finnish nose, was somehow sunken—uttered a stern French phrase in her low voice. Andrei caught the meaning: "Don't upset yourself over trifles, Georges." Then, addressing them all, she said:

"Georgi Georgiyevich always becomes terribly excited when there is any discussion about the young generation. We suffered a great misfortune with our nephew recently. He was a student in Kiev and in May he was exiled to Vologda. They took him through Moscow and he was caught in that dreadful massacre in the Okhothny Ryad. His skull was fractured and he was taken to hospital. Georgi Georgiyevich's sister, who is a widow, came to Petersburg and we made representations. And since then Georgi Georgiyevich...."

"I could have told them all this myself. I have a tongue in my head."

"But in my view," the lady with the concave face went on, raising her voice, "the situation is quite simple and requires no long discussion. They are acting dishonourably and people try to deal with them honourably. That is where the mistake is made."

But that was too much. This fool of a woman was not to be tolerated!

"Is it your view, Madam, that to send fourteen-year-old girls to Siberia merely because they make speeches on boulevards is acting honourably? And keeping people in prison, in solitary confinement for *years,* and then releasing them for lack of evidence—is that also acting honourably? Why, there's not a trace of honour about it."

Andrei did not notice his voice hardening with anger, as if he were at some public meeting rather than in a drawing room.

"I know nothing of the facts that you mention," Madam Lehman replied, startled not so much by what Andrei had said as by his aggressive tone.

"But I do! I am very well aware of such facts." Lehman made reassuring gestures to his wife as much as to say, "Wait a minute and we'll soon deal with this gentleman." "But all the same you are absolutely right, my dear. You have hit the nail on the head. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, himself a former rebel sentenced to penal servitude, who knows the whole business inside out, wrote in his novel *The Possessed* that the essence of the Russian revolutionary idea lies in the denial of honour. I remember that passage, I even made a note of it when I read it in the magazine. Because it could not have been put more precisely!"

"Mr. Dostoyevsky is remarkable for his ability to say one thing at first, and a little later assert quite the opposite. So I have no faith in this author," Andrei declared. "At one time he himself was 'an old Nechayev man', but now he pours dirt over all 'Nechayev people' indiscriminately. In *The Possessed* he wrote that the revolutionaries had no sence of honour, but in his diary, in his journal *The Citizen* about five years ago, he stated that lack of honour was a feature of our, Russian, character. Perhaps you have forgotten that passage? So if you want to know my opinion...."

"Tell me this first: Are you a Russian yourself?" Lehman inquired.

"Yes, you needn't be worried on that score, Georgi Georgiyevich," the interpolation came from Andrei's father-in-law—his former father-in-law, but still a grand old fellow, who was now looking at Andrei with a strange expression of mingled disapproval and admiration. "Andrei Ivanovich is a native Russian all right, his father was a serf."

"Ah, so that's it! Well, Andrei Ivanovich?"

"My opinion is this: it is the Russian revolutionaries who have *regenerated* the sense of honour among the people, if you want to know. All these revolutionary outbursts that we observe are the explosions of an insulted sense of honour. Do you understand that?" In his agitation he had begun to speak rudely. "Remember Gogol's Lieutenant Pirogov, who was thrashed by the locksmith Schiller? And after that Pirogov ate a puff pastry and danced the mazurka at a name-day party. Well, somebody had to put a stop to that Pirogov way of carrying on. And it was the revolutionaries who first said: Enough! No Russian person may be thrashed with impunity. For that you get a bullet through your head. What do you say to that? Is that not a sense of honour? And the girl who shot Trepov, she wasn't Bogolyubov's sister or his betrothed, she didn't even know him—what drove her to this action that was perhaps quite mad and wrong? Insulted honour, and nothing more. She could not bear to see human dignity outraged. Mr. Dostoyevsky does not know the young people of today. He is terrified of Nechayev, but Nechayev is a back number. No one even remembers him. Other people have appeared on the scene, other ideas sway men's minds. Nobody reads *The Possessed* nowadays except police officials."

"You are profoundly mistaken," Lehman replied, staring at Andrei, as if trying to take a detached view of him. "I hear you were one of the accused in the Big Trial? Yes, luckily there were no consequences. It's a blessing for the family. But, I repeat, you are profoundly mistaken."

"Dostoyevsky was quite right. They have no honour, these people." Olga's mother broke in suddenly from the sofa corner.

"Mother!" Olga exclaimed.

"They start families and can't live with them. Is that honourable? They beget children, and then will have nothing to do with them, don't see them for months," the mother's voice rose in a shaky crescendo. "They bring no money home, they won't work, they bring unhappiness on their own kith and kin...."

"Mother! What are you talking about?"

"I curse these people! I curse them, I curse them!" the old lady cried. Everyone rose to their feet. Geraltovsky stood open- mouthed, Yakhnenko ran stumbling to his wife, and still she shouted, "Monsters! I curse them! They have ruined your life!"

"You must go! Go at once!" Tasya waved frantically at Andrei.

"And I with you! I shall go with you!" Olga cried desperately. "Mother, Andrei is an honourable, an exceptionally honourable man. What have you done? I shall leave you and live alone, I don't want to know you...."

Like one demented, she dragged Andrei to the door; their son clung to her skirts, Yakhnenko was shouting something. Outside it was cold. Olga drew close to him. He put one arm round her and with his other hand pressed his son's little palm. It was as if he had known all this was bound to happen, and now that it had happened he was calm. And only a deep sadness gripped his heart.

They returned to their dark rooms and lighted the oil lamp. The stove had gone out and he went down into the yard to chop a little firewood. He wanted it to be warm in the house, very warm. Olga sorted out some linen and started washing. Her face was crumpled after her tears, but calm, even happy. He went up to her, took her face between his hands and, looking into her eyes, said, "We must part." She closed her eyes and nodded. Their son stood looking at them from the back of the room.

A VOICE FROM AFAR: P. P. SEMENYUTA

I, Pimen Semenyuta, have often asked myself, does a man ever really change? And now that life is nearly over I think I can say with some certainty—no, never. A man comes into this world branded, as it were, with a special *mark*, and that mark can never be erased, or washed off or altered, and all the apparent changes that come about in a man are mere accidents, something temporary and superficial that lies atop the mark. After all, we judge human nature by people with whom we are intimately acquainted. If we are surrounded by the wicked and unjust, we maintain that mankind is wicked and unjust; on the other hand, if those around us are kind, honest folk, we believe in goodness and think that mankind is worthy of a better fate. Perhaps I am talking nonsense. Forgive me, I am no longer young. I am a sick man and life has done its worst with me—as with any other Russian, incidentally, who has lived through the last three decades. For a long time I hoped that the

woman I once loved (Andrei Ivanovich Zhelyabov, by the way, was also strongly attracted to her) would somehow change with the years and become a different person and I should love her even more. But she did not change. My hopes were in vain. The strange thing was that I continued to be obstinately and drearily in love with her, and so, incidentally, was Andrei Ivanovich! He had been married a long time and had a son, but when, about eight years after our youthful rivalry, he called at my house—at the end of 1878—and saw this woman, I noticed his face instantly darken with the rush of blood to his cheeks, and a fresh sparkle appear in his eyes; it was so sudden and open. In general he was an excitable person, with a quick flush or pallor, easily roused to anger.

That evening we talked for hours, at first in the presence of the woman, I have mentioned. This excited him, spurred him on, and he gave us an exceptionally witty and lively description of his adventures as an unsuccessful melon-grower, and afterwards, when we were alone, we talked long into the night. Funnily enough, when taking his leave, he said in a stern, exacting tone, "You must treat her far better than you treat her now! I simply demand it of you!" I turned it into a joke but he, I think, was not joking. Anything he did or said was always bound up with some deep inner passion. The woman's name? That is of no importance. The important thing is that there was such a woman. No, it was not Anya Makarevich (by that time Anya was for ever parted from her native land) and not any of the other women in our radical circles. And the fact that he had left his wife, Olga Semyonovna Yakhnenko, a nice woman but far too domesticated, was not connected in any way with the story I have to tell.

That was a different matter, you see, the man had changed. That is what I am talking about. Our meeting at the end of 'seventy-eight astonished me. In his views, feelings, and way of life this man had come an immeasurable distance from the youth I remembered from our student days. At that time there had been a great fuss over the much talked of but really quite harmless affair of Professor Bogishich, one of those who were pursuing the Count Tolstoy line and turning the universities either into barracks or reform schools. Andrei Ivanovich was rusticated to a remote part of the Crimea by ship. I remember the crowd, the festive clamour, they were almost singing the "Marseillaise", and in that crowd was I, then a young re-

porter on the *Novorossiisky Telegraph* and there, too, was the *object* to which both Andrei Ivanovich and I were attracted. She had not yet made her choice. She was wavering and upset over his departure. He clasped my hand and said, "Good-bye!" and in his dark eyes I read a passionate envy, not because I was a free and independent person and he was being sent into exile, but because I was with her, holding her arm, because I had remained ashore and he was leaving. "Good-bye, good-bye!" I said, sympathising and pitying him quite sincerely, but nevertheless with a certain relief. As I recall, there was a terrible crush on the wharf, and some of the people were pressed against the side of the ship. Others were pushing from behind and when the ship cast off the people in front were nearly thrown into the water. There were shouts of terror and cries for help and I remember Andrei's pale face as he shouted to us from the ship, "Are you safe? Are you all right?" "Yes, we're fine! Good-bye!" I shouted joyfully and waved my hat.

I knew him from the student meetings of those years, as an agitator, a talker, a ranter, but no more. And suddenly his talk took quite a different turn. And physically he had grown much bigger, broader in the shoulders, with a dark beard and a powerful handshake. He spoke of the condition of the workers. The back-breaking toil and robbery they were subjected to, he said, led not only to growing discontent, but also to stupefaction and hopelessness. Co-operatives and unions could increase the workers' strength but the government was ceaselessly vigilant and crushed any attempt at organisation. "History moves too slowly. It needs a push. Otherwise the nation will degenerate before the liberals rouse themselves to do anything." "And what about a constitution?" I asked. "A constitution would come in useful." "Then which do you prefer: belief in a constitution or giving history a push?" He thought for a moment, then answered, "Now I am more inclined to rely on pushing!"

There was a change for you. The man had started by wanting to learn from the people and had come to the conclusion that he must teach history what to do. In the autumn and winter of 1878-79 we met fairly frequently. A couple of times I visited him at his wretched little flat in Gulevaya Street. Evidently Yakhnenko had disowned his daughter and refused to help her any more. She earned a little money as a midwife.

But usually Andrei Ivanovich came to see me, particularly as at the end of November or in December he broke it off altogether with Olga Semyonovna. He deliberately made his separation widely known in Odessa. There was a great deal of talk about it among our acquaintances and much sympathy was expressed for Olga Semyonovna, who had really loved him and hoped that he was not in earnest. But he had never been more in earnest in his concern for her. As things turned out, however, it didn't help.

Some of the Odessa radicals used to gather at my house and Valerian Osinsky also used to visit us when he was in Odessa. But Valerian visited everyone. I cannot remember anyone who had so many contacts in such different spheres and sections of society as Osinsky. A surprising gregariousness in a revolutionary! I wanted to introduce Andrei Ivanovich to him, Andrei declined for some reason. This puzzled me and I asked him straight out, "What is the objection?" "I don't like these loungers and aristocrats. You'll probably have Baron X and his pack of hounds there as well? I can't bear the sight of them."

Various people came to our house. Baron X, the satirist, a popular figure in Odessa, and by no means the worst of men, sometimes came to see us. He was certainly no aristocrat. In any case Andrei Ivanovich knew perfectly well that Baron X and Valerian Osinsky were not figures of equal magnitude and it was quite wrong to transfer his contempt for one so sweepingly to the other. Valerian had some very impressive exploits to his credit. Andrei Ivanovich must have known this, if I knew it. Yes, of course, he did. Valerian had organised the killing of the police spy in Rostov, the attempt on public prosecutor Kotlyarevsky, and the assassination of the gendarme officer Heiking, and it was he who had started using on proclamations the stamp of an Executive Committee, that had never actually existed. It was an oval stamp inscribed round the edge with the words, "Executive Committee of the Russian Social-Revolutionary Party" and in the middle was an emblem composed of a crossed dagger, revolver and axe. Some laughed at this ruse, others objected, but Valerian turned out to be right. The authorities were badly frightened by the emblem and all the interrogations of 1878 began and ended with the question, "What do you know about the Executive Committee?" Nobody, of course, knew anything. But a year

later this title was adopted by other people, so fiction proved to be prophetic.

Valerian Osinsky was, of course, a splendid person, brilliant, and Andrei Ivanovich, sensing this, avoided meeting him at large gatherings. You see, Andrei Ivanovich, between you and me, was noticeably ambitious and could not bear anybody to be superior to him. In the street, in a tavern, at a workers' meeting he was, of course, king; but at tea in the drawing room it was Valerian who carried the palm. He was much in favour with the ladies (even the one I have been talking about was not immune to the temptation). Slim, fair-haired, handsome, with a pince-nez and a short golden beard, he moved quickly, talked a lot and enjoyed chattering about trifles, nonsense, anything amusing, but always with some underlying ironic meaning. He liked mystification, flights of fancy, and easily came to believe in them himself. For him *Wahrheit und Dichtung* were often intermingled and he probably got mixed up over which was which. He once told me that at the age of twelve he had saved a neighbour who had been attacked by bandits and was in danger of being murdered. He had come running up with a gun and the bandits had taken to their heels. And there was another similar legend that in St. Petersburg, where Valerian had studied at the Institute of Railway Engineers, he had, while walking in the Summer Gardens, happened to meet the tsar and refused to make way for him. For this he had been hauled off to the police station, bawled at and threatened with banishment; but he had managed to talk his way out of it by saying that he was a newcomer to the capital and did not know the tsar, who had been wearing general's uniform, by sight. This may well have been the most genuine *Wahrheit,* but because Valerian so often indulged in fantasy we took even tale as having a large portion of *Dichtung.*

However, Valerian's audacity and valour were quite exceptional. In Petersburg he slightly staggered even the Land and Freedom people with his "disruptive" ideas that went as far as regicide, and there probably was never any true collaboration between them. But I know this only from hearsay and I had better not enlarge on it. As for Odessa and Andrei Ivanovich, unwilling though he was to have anything to do with Valerian, circumstances drew them together and even forced Andrei Ivanovich to avail himself of Valerian's assistance. Money, weap-

ons, passports—all these things at the end of 'seventy-eight and in January of seventy-nine, right up to the day of his arrest, could be obtained from Valerian. No more powerful man was to be found in Kiev, Odessa and the neighbouring cities.

Since he was as yet not "illegal", Andrei Ivanovich did not consider himself entitled to claim any money from Valerian's fund. But he had no money of his own. That winter he earned a mere pittance. Sometimes, when I met him in the street, I noticed that he was actually hungry. He had grown terribly thin, his face had an earthy tinge, quite devoid of its usual ruddiness. These were the weeks of his last, agonising hesitation before he finally made up his mind.

One day I spent a long time trying to persuade him to accept the proceeds from some kind of concert. He refused on the grounds that he had no hope of being able to pay it back in the near future, but I knew that he was pursued by debts and, above all, the need to provide a livelihood for his wife and son, with whom he was no longer living. I was insistent and we argued back and forth, and finally I said, "Consider that it comes from Valerian's fund." He blazed up at once. "That makes me even less likely to take it." I felt the bitterness in his voice. Not only was Valerian endowed with charm, audacity, intellect and good looks, he was also rich; he did not have to worry about where his next meal was coming from, or how to earn a living. By some means known exclusively to himself Valerian was able to acquire funds for the organisation. He had enlisted the help of Lizogub with his huge fortune. Sometimes he scored fantastic successes. For example, a wealthy Polish woman promised something like twenty thousand rubles for freeing Stefanovich and his comrades from prison. There was some highly involved romance behind it, so I was told. The Polish woman was in love with someone else who did not belong to the Stefanovich group but was also in prison, and she wanted to see an example of a successful escape because Valerian had promised to arrange a getaway for her lover as well. With the help of Frolenko, who became a prison warder for the purpose, Valerian managed not only to free Stefanovich, Deutsch and Bokhanovsky, but also to win the Polish woman's prize. Well, in the end, realising that I had been tactless, I assured Andrei Ivanovich that I had been joking when I mentioned Valerian's fund and that I was really offering him my own money as our

ten-years friendship entitled me to. And, of course, I was only lending it. He accepted somewhat sullenly, still convinced, no doubt, that he was borrowing from Valerian.

On yet another occasion he had to swallow his pride and ask Valerian for help. This was when he finally decided to become "illegal" and needed a forged passport. He got it from Valerian; it was made out in the name of Vasily Andreyevich Chernyavsky. That happened, I believe, at the very end of 1878, certainly not later than mid-January 1879, because at the end of January Valerian was captured in Kiev. His passport was genuine enough and had been tested in Odessa and Kiev at a time of great danger. It must have been very difficult to obtain. In fact, no one would believe it at first when we heard that Valerian had been arrested. The whole thing was so stupid really. A policeman stopped Valerian in the street and on some innocent pretext asked him to go to the police station with him. Suspecting nothing and possessing a good passport, Valerian complied. But instead of the district police officer he found himself confronted by Sudeikin. Valerian tried to draw his revolver but Sudeikin, a bull of a man, jumped on him, brought him to the ground and with the help of the policemen on duty disarmed him. You see, they had killed Baron Heiking and now he had been replaced by Sudeikin. But the baron wouldn't have been able to pull off a thing like that! Valerian was tried in May. By that time I was in exile and I read about it in the newspapers. "Osinsky struggled and kicked and we were obliged to tie him up," Sudeikin was quoted as saying. "Osinsky was in a state of frenzy. He screamed and threw himself about, shouting terrible curses at the police and the gendarmes. When I said to him you, gentlemen, are very good at stabbing people in the back, he replied, 'All the same they'll kill the whole lot of you, gendarmes, wherever you appear.' After a time he grew calm, then we untied him and began the interrogation."

The last thing that Valerian managed to do before his capture and execution (apart from getting the passport that made Andrei Ivanovich safe) was to provide money, weapons and contacts for Grigory Goldenberg, the assassin of Prince Kropotkin, Governor of the Kharkov Province. This was the Goldenberg who subsequently became famous for his revelations concerning the revolutionary party. But let others tell that story. I write only of those whom I knew well and

regarded as friends, of Andrei Ivanovich and Valerian. I remember that when Andrei Ivanovich heard of Valerian's arrest he was terribly upset and exclaimed with real pain in his voice, "How mistaken I was! How I curse myself! It was sheer stupidity, that perpetual revolting prejudice I have. His father was a high-ranking official, almost a general...."

But I take a different view. Though he had a very good brain, Andrei Ivanovich often went wrong in his judgement of people. He was not interested in the details of character. He was very general in his perceptions, he took a kind of rounded view of people, failing to notice the rough edges, the convolutions, the possibility of one core containing another and that core yet another, even smaller and harder, the truest of all. In short, I don't think he had the ability to spot that ineradicable *mark* on a man that I mentioned earlier. And it was no accident that more than once he drew people of doubtful character into the organisation. So let's go back to the beginning, *to that mark.* There was a person on the *Odessa Messenger* in those days whose name was Geraltovsky, a free-thinker of the drawing rooms, who had composed the following bit of doggerel: "Some are born to make revolutions and others to experience nocturnal pollutions". He himself, of course, was one of the latter, although he pretended to sympathise with the revolutionaries, which was considered *bon ton* in those days. After March 1st he was even whispering proudly of being a close friend of Andrei Ivanovich and visiting him at home. But a quarter of a century later, in our own city of Odessa, he showed himself to be such a scoundrel and supporter of the establishment that everyone gasped—everyone except me. I had spotted the *mark* of baseness on him long ago. People do not change; their *mark* remains. All that changes is the ornamentation around the *mark*, the ebb and flow that accompanies a man all his life and deceives the eye of his acquaintances.

Andrei Ivanovich, I am convinced, was destined for the fate that befell him.The surprise I experienced in the autumn of 'seventy-eight, when I noticed how changed he was, indicated only that I had not studied him thoroughly enough. A man does not change, sad though this may be. But, good heavens, need one look far for an example? I can judge by myself. I am old, ill and know that the end is not far hence, but what stupid, childish sensations I sometimes experience! I am

ashamed to admit them. I feel almost childish fears, an almost childish envy, almost childish disappointments and almost childish joys. But my greatest joy is not childish at all; it is the joy of being still alive. Andrei Ivanovich has become a world celebrity, I have seen pictures of him in foreign books and magazines (never a good likeness) and a few works about him are beginning to appear here after a silence of twenty-five years, but Andrei Ivanovich departed this world long ago and I am still around. And today, in April 1906, rejoicing in the achievements of Russian freedom, I cannot help recalling and thinking with gratitude of those who.... I could mention a good many things about Andrei Ivanovich—his warnings that I was in danger of being arrested for one thing, which I disregarded and suffered for accordingly, or the souvenir he gave me when we parted, a gold chain that Olga Semyonovna's parents had given him and that was to become a relic I have treasured ever since; it lies before me on my massive, dark-green marble ink-stand as I write these lines—but I will say no more because the time for the real recollections of Andrei Ivanovich has not yet come.

And you know what a strange conclusion I have reached? Yes, a man does change, and sometimes irrevocably, but only when he is dead. So we need not emphasise the irrevocability of it.

Clio—72

Nothing but events, facts, names, years, minutes, hours, days, decades, centuries, millennia constantly disappearing in the eternal flux that I, Clio, observe, a flux that knows neither grief nor passion, that is neither slow nor swift, not devoid of meaning and yet without any goal, the flux in which all is ultimately submerged.

Anna Rosenstein, Makarevich by her first marriage, lived for a time in Paris under the name of Kulishova and was expelled from France in May 1878, for organising sections of the International. She took up residence in Switzerland and became the wife of the Italian anarchist Andrea Costa. Later she moved to Milan, where she married Turati, the Italian socialist leader. She died in 1925, a woman of great age, and was given a splendid funeral. Anna Kulishova is far better

known in Italy than in Russia, the land of her birth. The news that Andrei Zhelyabov had been executed for regicide came as such a shock to his former father-in-law Yakhnenko that he had a stroke and died. Nobody would have anything to do with the Yakhnenko family after that; they lost all their money and Olga Semyonovna became almost destitute, went out of her mind, applied to have her name changed, disowned and denounced her husband to save her son's future, but no one knows if her request was granted; it has been hinted that she had to beg for alms in the name of Christ. All further news of her disappears, like everything else, in my eternal flux....

Chapter Two

In the late autumn of 1878, when Andrei Zhelyabov was trying to obtain a passport in Odessa in order to begin a new *illegal* life a certain Kletochnikov, Nikolai Vasilyevich, arrived in St. Petersburg. He was an official, aged thirty-one and hardly to be considered old were it not for his general shabbiness, his palid unhealthy complexion, dark glasses and manner of stooping and talking in a quiet voice that made him look much older. Why Nikolai Vasilyevich had suddenly uprooted himself, sold his belongings, left his position as cashier of the Mutual Credit Society in Simferopol and arrived post-haste in mid-winter in the damp and dreary Northern Palmyra, he scarcely knew himself. As if someone had been expecting him. But no one was. Not a soul, and in the Crimea no one had shed any tears of farewell on his departure. No doubt Nikolai Vasilyevich had some vague intention of changing his luck. His life had certainly been one long exasperating failure up to now. Illness had prevented him from finishing the course at the Medical Surgery Institute, he had buried his parents early, roamed aimlessly from one town to another, gone abroad for some reason, squandering the small legacy inherited from his parents, and always alone. Day and night with no one but himself for company—you would not wish such a fate upon your worst enemy. So he entered government service and endured the office boredom, coughing in the Crimean dust. Dr. Werner advised him to try a change of climate, but the doctor's face was as sour and miserable as the grave. "To

be quite frank however...." What did the climate matter? It was his fate that he had to change.

He had scarcely had time to settle down to life here, even to unpack his bags, and now off he must go again. It would have been hard to think of anything more foolish. From the dry and warm Crimean winter to the damp-loaded frosts of St. Petersburg with its slushy streets and a sky that either drizzled icy sleet or breathed down damp rawness on everyone—just the thing for consumption. But then Russia had only one capital, so there was no choice.

He found lodgings in a house on the Sands, at an address he had been given by some girl students. He had made their acquaintance in Yalta thanks to the momentary courage induced by a bottle of Johannesberger; but he had remembered the address and noted it down without the slightest hope of ever being able to use it or even believing that the young ladies had told him the truth. Why should these sweet young things be interested in such a bespectacled wrinkled old fogey? He had acquired an awful lot of wrinkles in the last two years and his hair had started thinning. He had ordered various ointments, a remedy known as Dr. Gardner's cure, and the Brussels elixir which he had seen advertised in the magazines and paid for at great expense, but all to no avail. So when he drove up to the house on the Sands he told the cabman to wait because he was so sure that the young ladies had sent him on a wild goose chase. But all three of them were at home and for some reason were incredibly glad to see him. In the very same house they found him a room, rather a dark one, on the ground floor, but quite good enough to go on with.

When he started looking for work, the girls helped him, wished him well, invited him to tea in the evenings, dragged him off to the theatre with them, and on one occasion he himself invited all three to a tea-shop, where he treated them to coffee and some splendid cakes—almond cones full of cream that was not just ordinary white cream but slightly yellow and lemon-flavoured. Each cone cost eight kopeks. He really splashed his money about that day—a whole ruble or more. But he had no regrets whatever because he was becoming more and more fond of the young ladies. And as the days went by he became more and more convinced that they were not the usual kind of young ladies, the twittering kind of which there were hordes in St. Petersburg, but independent young women,

free not only in their behaviour (they had confided to him many of their disappointments as if he were one of the family) but also in their thoughts and reasoning. And for Nikolai Vasilyevich this had always been the most precious thing of all. They also had, so he was beginning to guess, some secret connections, some extraordinary acquaintances. One of them let it out that she knew a student who was friendly with somebody who was on familiar terms with the driver of the black stallion that had carried Mezentsev's assassin away from the scene of the crime. Another told him about a mysterious newspaper called *Land and Freedom,* which had recently brought out its first issue. She had actually held it in her hands for exactly one minute before it was whisked away to be shown to someone who, though closely connected with the court, was, so they said, quite a liberal and decent person. That one glance, however, had been enough to tell her that for the mere reading of such a publication one could count on Siberia and the mines. It made Nikolai Vasilyevich burn to have just one look! After all, making a fresh start in life did not mean just going into another office to wear out the seat of one's trousers.

He had his own secret dream and for a long time he kept quiet, not daring to speak of it, but in the end he asked if he might not be introduced to one of *them.* This was greeted with wondering glances, exclamations. Who exactly did he mean by *them*? Well, *those* acquaintances of yours who know those who know the top ones among *them.* The young ladies seemed to find this very funny. "Oh, Nikolai Vasilyevich, what a person you are! And your name's Kletochnikov!* Perhaps it's a 'cage' you're dreaming of? One of those in the building near the Chain Bridge?" And so they went on laughing and joking. We don't know any of *them* and we don't want to either. We're good girls, we are, and that kind of thing doesn't interest us. We like coffee and almond cakes and the French opera.... Yet you do make us wonder just what you might be wanting to get to know any of *them* for. Somehow he explained it. It was his old wish to make a new start. "Life is so dull in this world, gentlemen," as his namesake, Nikolai Vasilyevich Gogol, used to say. Three days later the girls sought him out and took him home. In their room there sat a young man, stockily built, with

* The Russian *kletka* means "cage".—*Tr.*

a calm unobtrusive face, fair hair, and attentive eyes—Pyotr Ivanovich.

"So there was nothing for you to do in the Crimea, Nikolai Vasilyevich?" Pyotr Ivanovich had a bottle of beer on the table in front of him and a plate with a cutlet and cucumber on it. He had plunged his fork into the cutlet and was disposing of it with his knife. This was not very good table manners, but all of a sudden Nikolai Vasilyevich gave a queer little laugh as it dawned on him that if this man was one of *them*, this was the only way he would go about things—with a knife.

"There's plenty to do there, but it's all so dull...."

And he could not tear his eyes away from that knife dealing with the cutlet. It made him shiver.

They talked about the Crimea, about this and that. Nikolai Vasilyevich plucked up courage and eventually managed to ask, could anything be found in which he might be of some *use*? He would very much like to be *useful* because life was passing, he was in poor health and he had no real purpose; his life was just one long uselessness. Pyotr Ivanovich thought for some time, then he said:

"You know what, Nikolai Vasilyevich? I have a little job on hand; only at the moment it's not really work. The work will come later. Here's the address—corner of Nevsky and Nadezhdinskaya Street, house of Yakovlev. A certain Kutuzova, Anna Petrovna, lives there. She's a midwife, widow of a colonel, and makes a living by letting rooms, mostly to young people. And there is a suspicion that this Anna Petrovna is helping the Third Section, because some of the girl students who have lived in her rooms and been called in for interrogation on minor matters have told us that there were some things that the police could not possibly have known—and yet they did know them. So that's the suspicion and we have either to confirm or dispel it. Because it's a serious business and we've got to warn people against this shark. Do you agree to take lodgings at Anna Petrovna's under the pretext of being.... Well, do you need any pretext? Just be yourself and take up residence. Find yourself a job. Or perhaps she'll find you one. She has connections."

"I understand. But tell me, Pyotr Ivanovich, who is it, so to speak.... Who has this suspicion?"

"About Anna Petrovna?"

"Yes, exactly. *Who* is interested in this riddle, so to speak?"

"I am. It interests me extremely. Me, Pyotr Ivanovich. And I am the person you will tell if you manage to find out." And those firm eyes of his found their mark and held it unblinkingly—yes, the man was a real devil. And how boldly he had raised the matter! A venturesome gentleman, to be sure.

Well, there was certainly a good chance of being useful here and also of changing one's life—with the Third Section in the background. But—and here Nikolai Vasilyevich's heart beat faster—would he be able to carry such a burden? And it was this he was thinking of when he mumbled, "This is rather a tall order you know.... You need special ability to win somebody's confidence like that."

"Have a try. It's something I, Pyotr Ivanovich, need to know very badly."

Anna Petrovna Kutuzova turned out to be a lady in what is usually referred to as her "final bloom". Her bilberry-red cheeks and neck glistened from being rubbed with a very greasy cream that smelled like Drimmler's. She went about the flat in a house-coat with her head wrapped in a towel, and only in the evening was the daily house-coat changed for another that looked more like a dress, and the towel removed to reveal a flimsy structure of greyish hair. One glance was enough to tell Nikolai Vasilyevich that she was in the same trouble as himself: falling hair. And this formed the topic of their initial conversations. After that Nikolai Vasilyevich began to be invited for tea and a game of cards. Anna Petrovna turned out to be a passionate card-player. She could sit at the card-table till midnight, till one in the morning, and if she was getting good cards there would be no unseating her. She would practically threaten you with eviction. "No, my dear sir, I see you don't like cards, I shall have to look for some other tenants!" she would say with a chuckle and a cunning glint in her sharp little eyes; and her partners would turn pale, so Nikolai Vasilyevich observed.

They usually played a foursome: Captain Rynda, retired, an old woman called Bogdanovich, or a Pole whose name was Vavichek and who was attending lectures at the University, and Anna Petrovna partnered by Nikolai Vasilyevich. Sometimes, when four were not available, Anna Petrovna would

make Nikolai Vasilyevich play with her alone. She would occasionally drop her cards and he would crawl under the table, groping through a cloud of lavender in dangerous proximity to Anna Petrovna's massive leg. One day the housecoat fell open revealing something pink amid a rustle of white lace, and Nikolai Vasilyevich, bumping his pate in haste, scrambled out from under the table. Soon, however, Anna Petrovna became reconciled to the idea that there was nothing to be gained from her new lodger except her trivial winnings at cards. But though small, they were regular, and they now formed Anna Petrovna's constant evening indulgence. She was not particularly disappointed if a foursome could not be gathered. Playing with Nikolai Vasilyevich, such a mild and uncomplaining man, with the support of tea and a rowan-flavoured liqueur was every bit as good, perhaps even more delightful, because she could always look forward languorously to the unfailing joy of winning a ruble or two. Nikolai Vasilyevich was not fond of cards. He had no memory for them and sometimes during the game his thoughts would drift far away and he would ask himself almost in horror, "Why am I sitting here, miserable fellow that I am? Am I condemned to waste my evenings away with this fool of a woman?" While delighting in her passion, however, Anna Petrovna found time to chatter and ask questions. Either she would talk about her late husband, the artillery colonel, who had been descended from a famous Kutuzov, not the Field Marshal but the Rosicrucian, a member of a secret society, a conspirator ("We, Kutuzovs, have all been freethinkers, it's an old tradition with us!"). Or else she would start talking about her young tenants, men and women students that she was always very fond of and always found excuses for. Nikolai Vasilyevich, on the other hand, was not at all keen on those short-haired girls; he called them "clipperty-snippets", and said that if he could have his way he would lock them all up in nunneries. Let them make themselves useful there, washing the monks' breeches for them—at least that would be some good. Anna Petrovna was of a different opinion and they argued.

But he never came anywhere near to finding the answer to what Pyotr Ivanovich had asked about.

The whole thing was becoming a bore. After all, he wasn't being paid to do it, was he? So he decided to rid himself of this sickening creature. There was no work to be found, he told her,

life was expensive here and he would soon be broke. He had better return to the provinces, either to his home in Penza or to the Crimea, where at least it was warm. Anna Petrovna was startled out of her wits. Such a nice lodger and he wanted to leave! Always quiet, never drunk, paid a good rent, never brought in undesirables and, above all, every evening without fail he forked out a few kopeks, if not more. Surely there must be some work for him in this huge city! But that was the trouble—there wasn't. You had to have connections, otherwise there was no hope. No, he had better go back to the provinces, to the simple life. There wouldn't be any elegant tea-shops, gas lamps in the streets or French dancers and singers, but at least the people were kind and the living was cheap. But suppose we could find you.... What? Find you something suitable, something you might like. What might you have in mind, for example, Anna Petrovna? Well, for example, for example.... She gave him a foxy look with her bilberry-red eye. She had a nephew, for instance, named Gusev. He worked in the Third Section, a thoroughly respectable person, she could ask him. Surely there ought to be something there.

Nikolai Vasilyevich nearly jumped out of his chair. So that was it! She had let it out at last, the old donkey. So it was true. Pyotr Ivanovich had been right all along: the widow was from *there*. That very evening Nikolai Vasilyevich hurried to the flat on the Sands, as had been agreed, and told them he wanted to see Pyotr Ivanovich. They asked him to come the next day. Pyotr Ivanovich listened to the story with no apparent joy, but when Nikolai Vasilyevich said, "Now, thank goodness, I can escape from that Circe," he looked astonished. "Escape? Not until you are enrolled in the Third Section." Nikolai Vasilyevich could scarcely believe his ears. Enrolled? In the Third Section? He must be joking. Not on your life. He was dead serious, far more serious than one might imagine. But to enter the service of the Third Section, that sink of evil, that snake pit with its scolopendras and poisonous reptiles? Did he want poor Kletochnikov, whose luck was bad enough as it was, relentlessly raining blows upon him, to be turned into a wretched swine like the men of the Odyssey under this Circe's charms? Fear God, my dear Pyotr Ivanovich, have pity on a poor orphan, don't ask the impossible. After all, if you insist, I shall not be able to refuse, and if I cannot refuse—this is the end, I am a dead man.

He mumbled pitifully, with panic in his thoughts, but somewhere far deeper down, in his heart of hearts, there was jubilation. No, this was not the end, it was the beginning. Yes, the *beginning!* And already he knew that he would agree.

Pyotr Ivanovich was speaking persuasively.

"The trouble is, Nikolai Vasilyevich, that there are so many spies about. They are breeding and multiplying at government expense. Just take the house you live in, on the corner of Nevsky and Nadezhdinskaya; it's a nest of spies. And how many more like that in Petersburg? Why, in this country there are three spies to every honest man. No, I'm not exaggerating. They're lurking everywhere—in the streets, the University, in the taverns, in the trams. Didn't you read the verse of the late Nekrasov, published in *New Times* recently? It's called "To a Lounger": The last stanza was missing, but we know it.

And looking at Nikolai Vasilyevich with his firm blue, unwavering glance, he recited:

Why should you sit with naught to do?
You've studied science, now you're through.
There's love of Russia in your heart.
How well you speak, with wit and fire,
And honest thoughts your words inspire,
So go to, make a start!
Or does life seem just low and mean?
You seek a job that's safe and clean?
'Tis not the time, you'd rather wait.
Today for spies alone
'Tis safe—they own
The city like the crow
That sits within its gate.

And so we've got to make it unsafe for them. We've got to shoot them down like mad dogs. That's our only salvation. No decent people will stand a chance otherwise.

Nikolai Vasilyevich surmised that by "decent people" Pyotr Ivanovich meant people of a certain kind, but it would have been tactless to ask for further details. He had heard of the round-up of the revolutionary party two or three months ago in which many of its leaders and notables had been arrested, and this, of course, had not been done without the help of spies. So Pyotr Ivanovich's hatred of these vile creatures was quite understandable.

"If you, Nikolai Vasilyevich, could only worm your way into their bosom or, better still, into their entrails, right into their guts...."

"I'll try, Pyotr Ivanovich," he replied, quaking at the sound of his own voice.

The widow was overjoyed when she heard that her lodger, having given serious thought to the matter, had decided to consent. Her nephew would be invited forthwith. He turned out to be a tall burly, very bald individual, past middle age, who could easily have been Anna Petrovna's husband. From the conversation it transpired that he had been married twice and had five children, three by his first wife, who had died in childbirth, and two sons by his second, a German, the daughter of a manufacturer. They drank tea, eating jam with it, and talked about current events. Nikolai Vasilyevich railed as usual against the "clipperty-snippets" and Anna Petrovna defended them. All of a sudden, without any preamble the nephew said morosely and, as it seemed to Nikolai Vasilyevich, with a certain displeasure, "So kindly present yourself on Friday to Gospodin Kirillov!"

Evidently the widow had some influence over her nephew and he had complied with her request reluctantly, not daring to ignore it. After his departure Anna Petrovna hinted that she had him just where she wanted him; he would do what he was told because he was expecting a legacy from her. Poor fellow, he would have a long time to wait, Nikolai Vasilyevich thought to himself. What a job—to outlive such a woman! But that night, lying in bed awake, remembering and thinking things over, sweating with terror at some of the thoughts that crossed his mind, Nikolai Vasilyevich suddenly decided that Anna Petrovna had spun him a yarn; this was no nephew of hers, nor was he expecting any legacy. Yes, it was all a yarn. But why? And what, in fact, were the ties between them? Why was he so compliant? A sudden simple solution dawned on Nikolai Vasilyevich: he obeyed her because she was *his superior in rank.* This conviction only made him all the more frightened, however. Of what possible use could he, a wretched unemployed official, be to this menacing creature? What interest could she have in him? Surely not just the ruble she made out of him every evening at cards? No, there must be something else. Nikolai Vasilyevich sensed that he was becoming involved in a queer kind of game, some hidden trap. Here was

he trying to ensnare somebody and all the time he himself was being ensnared himself! He could neither sleep nor think of any way of retreat, any escape. Only one thought brought him some relief. Here it was, at the end of life—the chance of being useful, a terrifying usefulness, breathing the icy cold of death, making him shake at the knees and want to cry out "Mother!" and yet ... and yet *uselessness* was far more deadly and icy cold. *Uselessness* was like ice itself, it froze the blood. He fell asleep when it was nearly morning and had nightmares. Anna Petrovna appeared to him in bestial shapes, with a cat's face or long fangs protruding from her mouth, or with epaulettes on her shoulders, or even with her house-coat thrown wide-open exposing white thighs all covered in bluish frog-like patterns.

Gospodin Kirillov, head of the Third Section's secret department, did not talk with Nikolai Vasilyevich for very long, but it was a strange conversation. It seemed to go some oblique way, as if every word must have some hidden meaning, as if it were not just an ordinary interview but something ominously significant, a kind of *interrogation.* Goodness knows, perhaps the man had forgotten how to talk simply and had to put a trap or a twist in everything he said? For example: "What made you go off to that exhibition in Vienna in 'seventy-three?" Since Nikolai Vasilyevich had made the journey without any special purpose in mind he could offer no explanation. He blushed and mumbled and Gospodin Kirillov seemed to gloat victoriously. Aha, caught you there! To some people Kirillov might have appeared splendid and imposing—the lofty forehead, long prominent nose, black moustache and side-burns with a trace of grey, but to Nikolai Vasilyevich there was something repellent in this handsome face. It had a bloodless, almost deathly pallor. As a boy, Nikolai Vasilyevich had used to go exploring caves and disused quarries and there in the darkness he would discover beetles and plants that lived without light; they had been a whitish colour, and blind. And it was this same whiteness, this evidence of a subterranean, secret existence, that was on Kirillov's face. Blinking his heavy eyelids, he asked, "What about your health, Nikolai Vasilyevich? Have you any complaints?"

"No, why should I?" Nikolai Vasilyevich answered almost resentfully, but his heart was in his mouth. How very clever of the man to ask such a thing. But why should he be interested in my state of health?

Kirillov explained at once in severe tones.

"We don't need any sick people in our department, certainly not. I wouldn't say you look exactly blooming." He surveyed his candidate with a frankly quizzical eye. "You haven't got TB, have you? You might infect our people. Perhaps that's what they've sent you here for—to infect the whole of the hated Third Section, eh? How about that?" He gave a laugh that twisted his face into a scowl.

Nikolai Vasilyevich shook his head and waved his hands—nothing of the kind! But inwardly he was trembling. What a place! What a ghastly crowd! Monsters! Reptiles! How could he work with them? It would be unbearable. Surely they were not all like this? Meanwhile Kirillov had taken a form from his safe, and was flicking it across the glass top of the desk. The form was headed "Written Application". Below this the applicant had to state that he wished to be employed as a secret agent at a salary of 30 rubles a month. Nikolai Vasilyevich wrote the application. Gospodin Kirillov appended his signature and, having inquired who Nikolai Vasilyevich might be interested in to begin with, told him to come on Monday at ten o'clock.

On January 24th, Nikolai Vasilyevich met Pyotr Ivanovich and told him the whole story. Of one thing he gave warning in advance. If he was expected to betray or inform on anyone, no matter who, he would resign at once. Serve in the secret police! Why, if anyone had told him a little while ago, "You, Kletochnikov, will as from January be receiving a salary from the Third Section", he would have stared at the man as if he were a complete idiot. And probably have slapped his face.

Pyotr Ivanovich smiled in a gentle and friendly way.

"My dear Nikolai Vasilyevich! Nowadays everything changes so quickly and irresistibly that there is nothing surprising about it. Not long ago I, for example, was living in a dreadful out-of-the-way hole with a lot of anti-priests, reading schismatic books and performing their ritual, and all of a sudden here I am, in the capital, smoking expensive cigarettes, drinking beer and talking on equal terms with an agent of the Third Section. How about that? Isn't that surprising?"

Nikolai Vasilyevich nodded despondently, as if he appreciated the joke, but it didn't make things any easier. Then Pyotr Ivanovich told him where and how they would meet in future, asked him to keep very punctually to the appointed

days and times, and also to take note of the signs that were usually placed on window-sills, such as books, lamps or perhaps a vase of flowers. Suddenly he asked whether Nikolai Vasilyevich was very short-sighted, and whether he could see well in his glasses? Nikolai Vasilyevich replied that he was rather short-sighted and his glasses were not strong enough, but he had got used to them. "Get them changed," Pyotr Ivanovich observed.

"Yes, I know. I've been thinking of it. I'll go and see a doctor...."

"You must change your glasses at once," Pyotr Ivanovich said in a stern and unpleasant tone. "Your sight is not just your own now; it belongs to others too. Here is the address of a doctor." He tore a page out of his notebook and gave it to Nikolai Vasilyevich. "Have you enough money to order them now? In a good frame they'll cost five rubles fifty."

As he put the paper into his pocket Nikolai Vasilyevich stuttered the words that for all their having been long in the back of his mind were still just as distasteful to him; but he just had to say them. He would like to borrow, if it were at all possible, about twenty rubles. He had to pay his rent and he needed to have just a taste of Petersburg life for a change; sitting there every evening at those wretched cards, he had used up all his funds. He mumbled rather incoherently and at great length; it all sounded rather pitiful and he felt himself blushing. But he had no choice. Pyotr Ivanovich nodded with the same serious air and, taking out his purse, counted the twenty rubles and gave them to Nikolai Vasilyevich. Then he jotted something down in his notebook.

"That's that, then," he said. "You're welcome. And I expect you have acquired some debts as well?"

"No, I never do that. I can't stand being in debt. But you know what? Just an outing with the girls—you know them too, down at the Sands, remember?—I'd like to take them out to the tea-shop on the Nevsky...."

"I don't advise it. You had better drop all that."

"But why? You know them yourself! Such nice girls, doing their courses here. Quite radical...."

"No, you must drop all that, Nikolai Vasilyevich." Pyotr Ivanovich smiled and made a gentle, soothing gesture as if he were talking to a child. "If you'll forgive me for the comparison, Nikolai Vasilyevich, you are like a woman in the family

way now; you must rearrange your whole life. You had better stay at home. Heaven forbid, we don't want you to trip up over nothing. Why should we let that happen? Yes, of course, I know those young women. Nothing special about them, rather empty-headed young things. Just forget them."

On the evening of the same day, January 24th, 1879, Pyotr Ivanovich—his real name was Alexander Mikhailov—opened a notebook in a pink binding headed "Cash Book of L. and F. Soc.". Here he put down all the expenditures of the Land and Freedom Society, large and small, up to a hundred rubles, and once, in December, the sum of two hundred and fifty, which was sent to Saratov to help the settlement there. The notebook had been started three months ago and the first entries had been perhaps a little comic: "Two overcoats and two hats—39. Two pairs of top-boots and galoshes—16." "Sparrow (i.e. Kolya Morozov), living expenses—20." But the December expenditures included some that were not to be taken lightly. These were marked unobtrusively "dis", standing for "disruption". On page three the entry read: "January 24th, loan to Lev—17." (That morning he had met Tikhomirov.) And below this was written: "Loan to agent—20."

So from tomorrow onwards this strange little man would be there, in the building by the Chain Bridge. The incredible had happened. How had he taken them off their guard? Kutuzova, and the official who was supposed to be her relative, and Kirillov himself, why had they seized upon him like this? It was so difficult to get in there, incredibly difficult, but he seemed to have experienced no difficulty whatever. So there must be something about him that the ordinary eye could not perceive, some hidden talent, something with the properties of soap or vaseline that enabled him to penetrate, to slip through. Very interesting. Fascinating. The main interest, of course, was yet to come, but meanwhile—not a word. It was too early yet to exult. Only deepest secrecy. Not even their closest associates would know about him. Particularly now, when passions were running high and a situation resembling that of the swan, the crayfish and the pike was developing. The society might just prematurely explode like a badly made bomb. In October, they had caught such fighters as Olga Natanson, Adrian Mikhailov, the driver of Varvar, Oboleshev, Malinovskaya, Bulanov and Masha Kolenkina—Masha, brave girl, had

tried to shoot her way out. Misfortune seemed to have united the survivors, but not for long. At meetings there was nothing but mutual recrimination and wrangling that only stopped short of insults. The "revolvermen" and the "villagers"—these were the two poles between which the glorious society was splitting and being ripped apart. And this meant that neither one side nor the other must know a thing about the strange little man Nikolai Vasilyevich. Double, treble secrecy, the secrecy of the grave. This could mean the greatest success for years, or else disaster, more deaths. What was there to commend him? First, that he was a newcomer, a provincial, without relatives or friends, without connections or commitments. The best people for this kind of work were the loners. But they were equally attractive to the Third Section. Secondly, he neither drank nor smoked; he was submissive, lethargic, weak-chested, with the wispy beard and pallor of a monk. Appearance was very important. When a sickly fellow like this, with one foot in the grave, offered his life for the common *cause*, it was to be taken seriously. A similar offer from, say, Martynovsky or a strapping fellow like Shmeman, for instance, would make one wonder if there was not something theatrical about it, *à la* Schiller. And besides he had shown himself to be educated. He had read the philosophers and one day had even spoken of the Paris Commune with enthusiasm.

Such were the thoughts of Alexander Dmitriyevich Mikhailov, nicknamed the Janitor. They inspired in him a mixture of hope and anxiety. Before he went to bed he barricaded the door as usual with the wardrobe and the table and put a loaded revolver under his pillow.

Kletochnikov's *usefulness* soon began to reveal itself. Only a few days had passed since his enrolment when the agent gave warning of searches that were to be made in the lodgings of certain men and women students; everyone was warned in advance, and yet one radically-minded but foolish young lady nearly ruined the whole thing. Eager to make fun of the gendarmes who had come to make the search, she said derisively, "Well, hullo there! We've been expecting you for some time!" The gendarmes, of course, discovered nothing incriminating except that one derisive phrase, which they passed on to their superiors. This threw the Third Section into a state of commotion. Who could have warned the students about the

forthcoming searches? The preparations for the operation had been known only to Kirillov, his assistant Gusev, Kletochnikov, and a woman student who had offered her services as an informer. Kirillov and Gusev called in the new agent for a severe grilling and Kletochnikov—he himself was amazed at his own cold-bloodedness!—stated quite firmly that it was the girl student who had let the cat out of the bag. The girl was summoned. She broke down in tears and the case against her was clear; she was dismissed. Kletochnikov came through the ordeal without a scratch, but after this almost fatal incident the leaders of the Land and Freedom party began to wonder whether all the agent's messages should be acted upon at once. To lose such a man—and his usefulness was increasing every day in geometrical progression—would be nothing short of a crime.

Take the dozen or so phrases passed on by Kletochnikov at the end of January, almost as soon as he entered the service. Were they not of exceptional value?

"At the end of 1878 a clerk from the Shau Factory, (Narva Gate district) Fyodor Frantsev, handed a worker a letter of introduction from the tutor Pyotr Nikolayev (a spy) to Frantz Matveyevich Fedorovsky (corner of Kazachy and Zagorodny, 60/10, first floor, six windows, three entrances), a former barrister. With this letter the worker presented himself to Fedorovsky, who on learning that the worker had escaped from his place of exile, took a lively interest in him and gave him 16 rubles; he asked whether he knew the people working in the Free Russian Press, and could he put him in touch with them because he had heard that they needed money. He then opened a casket and showed the worker a bond for 20,000 rubles and several banned publications and suggested that they be made use of. "How could I get to know the top man there, the one who runs the whole business? If I could, I would like to go into partnership," he said.

"The adopted son of the schoolmistress Aleksandrova (from Moscow) visited Fedorovsky several times and sometimes stayed the night. He talked a lot and during the night was searched by Fedorovsky, who had bought him a new suit of clothes.

"Fedorovsky is undoubtedly a spy. His distinctive features: 40-45 years of age, dark hair, less than average height, Catholic, wedge-shaped beard, side-burns...."

Yes, this was certainly a gold-mine, but as yet nothing urgent was involved; it was not a matter of life or death. Soon, however, at the beginning of February, the agent became a *mortal* necessity. This was when the affair of Reinstein the locksmith came up. Mikhailov knew him a little, as he knew many of the members of the Northern League of Russian Workers. Reinstein was sent to Moscow to organise a branch of the League there, but soon after his arrival somebody was exposed and mass arrests were made. He returned to Petersburg in early February, about the 6th. Meanwhile at the end of January Obnorsky, the leader of the Northern League of Russian Workers was arrested, and in the middle of February the police captured Klements, an editor of the *Land and Freedom* paper whom they had been hunting unsuccessfully for a long time. This series of disasters evoked suspicion. The agent was brought in and his investigations produced astounding results. Reinstein was to blame both for the Moscow round-up and the arrests of Obnorsky and Klements. The agent stated that in Moscow Reinstein had received several hundred rubles from the police and, having dealt so successfully with the Moscow underground, had promised in return for a thousand rubles to do the same with the Petersburg revolutionaries. He was helped in his activities by his wife Tatyana Alekseyevna, who had once been Obnorsky's mistress. Such was the delightful news that came to light in the middle of February and the decision was taken at once: Reinstein was to be executed.

On February 15th, Mikhailov made an entry in his pink notebook: "Rodionych, special op.—100." On February 21st, another entry was made: "Cold steel—20."

On February 26th, the spy Reinstein, who had imagined that it would be quite easy to earn a thousand rubles on the blood of revolutionaries, was killed in Moscow, in a room in what used to be the Mamontov Hotel.

When Rodionych returned to Petersburg it was some time before he could give any coherent account of what had happened. Nobody asked him for one. Gradually he began to talk but he could not control himself; his hands shook, his face became flushed and he gasped as if suffering from an attack of asthma. "These damned Nechayev tactics!..." he muttered one day. But that was quite absurd! It had to be explained to him that the tactic adopted in this case had nothing whatever to do

with Nechayev; Ivanov, the student Nechayev had murdered, had never been a spy, but was merely one of Nechayev's rivals and liked to argue. Reinstein, on the other hand, had done so much real harm. But why argue? Rodionych understood all this perfectly well, but he must have had some inner qualms, a moment of inward hesitation. Just at this time a new affair was under discussion, once again involving inevitable bloodshed—the execution of Prince Drenteln, who had replaced Mezentsev as Chief of the Gendarmerie. Only Plekhanov among the members of the Council grimly refused to vote in favour. The attempt was unsuccessful. Leon Mirsky galloped down the Nevsky Prospekt, fired a shot at Drenteln that missed, and galloped away. This threw the authorities into frantic confusion; Petersburg was up in arms, searches and arrests were made all over the city. The opponents of terrorism—Plekhanov first among them—again raised a vociferous protest: "Here you see the results of brigand tactics! We are being destroyed!" But the chief *verbal* terrorist, Kolya Morozov published an article in the *Land and Freedom Newssheet*, where it was stated in black and white that "political assassination is the realisation of revolution in the present". This meant that the break-up of the party was continuing and the end was near.

At this juncture two successful young southerners arrived on the scene—Goldenberg and Kobylyansky. In February, Goldenberg had shot Prince Kropotkin, the Governor-General of Kharkov. Kobylyansky had helped him. This operation had been planned by Osinsky, i. e., it was the work of Land and Freedom and, although Osinsky was in prison by that time, it was his finger that was on the trigger and his revolvers that fired the shots. Kobylyansky was a young sturdily built Pole. He could hardly speak Russian and maintained long embarrassed silences; Goldenberg, on the other hand, talked enough for ten. His speech had the rapid lilt and changing intonations of a southerner; the speech of Odessa and Kiev. He was very proud of the Kropotkin *affair*. He told the story over and over again with all the details and, when he became particularly excited and started waving his hands, small bubbles would appear on his lips.

He felt he was a hero and liked to be taken round the "illegal" appartments, plied with vodka and allowed to talk, talk, talk. It looked rather as if Grishka had gone slightly off his

rocker. All of a sudden, when the five of them—Kobylyansky, Mikhailov, Kvyatkovsky and Zundelevich—had gathered in a tavern where one could talk relatively freely, he announced that he had not come to Petersburg for nothing. None of the comrades need be surprised. He had decided to strike the last blow. He was going to kill the *bear*. He would finish what Mitya (Karakozov) had left unfinished. And no one need try to dissuade him. He didn't want any talk, just silence, complete silence. "The bear is mine!" He thumped on the table with his fist and the bubbles hopped about on his lips. "And I'm not giving it to anyone!"

After one of these tavern meetings Mikhailov said to Kvyatkovsky, "I don't know whether to tell our people on the Council? On the one hand, it's our duty...."

"Don't say anything yet."

"I won't then. But what a row there will be if they find out from someone else. It's a grim thought!"

They decided to say nothing for the time being. Besides, there was no action in the offing, just a lot of talk and boasting. Admittedly, underneath all Grishka's love of bragging there was a kind of insane strength; out of sheer fool-hardiness he could turn his back on everyone and throw himself into the maddest undertaking. They couldn't let him out of their sight for a single day. And then Solovyov turned up. He had arrived in Petersburg before Grishka, perhaps as early as December, but he appeared on the scene and started looking for Mikhailov only in March. Whenever something came up they all looked for Mikhailov. Having found him, Solovyov confessed his firm intention, which turned out to be the same as Grishka's. This was why he had come, leaving Saratov, the settlement, his friends, and saying nothing to anyone. Now what was to be done? They had to introduce him to Grishka and Kobylyansky and discuss the whole thing together, the five of them with Solovyov as the sixth.

But still not a word to the Council!

Again they went to the tavern, the same one. The same back room, bottles of beer and smoked fish on the table, and the oppressive, stifling atmosphere of their conversation. Oppressive because he, Kvyatkovsky and Zund had no wish to venture into the unknown, they still had their feet on the ground, while the other three were straining to cross that mysterious borderline. Mikhailov knew that he, too, would cross it one

day, probably quite soon. But not today, not yet. It was as though a sword had fallen from heaven and divided them; three seated themselves on one side of the table and the other three sat facing them. Even the faces of those on the other side were different. In the candlelight there seemed to be something set and lifeless about them. Grishka asked for vodka. Kvyatkovsky knocked on the wall and Fedka, the waiter, hurried in with a decanter. No one drank but Grishka and Kobylyansky, and even they did not get drunk. Advice was no use, they had to decide for themselves what to do and how it should be done. Solovyov insisted that he would not withdraw. All he needed was a powerful revolver and poison. Could the society supply them? The other three said they could not answer for the society. Zundelevich said the shot should not be fired by either a Jew or a Pole because that would immediately start *pogroms*. "I knew you would say that!" Grishka's face became distorted. Kobylyansky withdrew, Goldenberg insisted, but everyone realised that he would not be allowed to shoot. In the end, Grishka begged Solovyov to let him be his reserve marksman. Solovyov would not agree to that either. In a situation like this (he had thought it all out) you had to act instantaneously and alone. The more participants, the greater the likelihood of failure. Mikhailov studied this man with passionate attention. He had known him before but now it seemed as if he had never known him. Solovyov with his grey, tense face looked like a minor official who had lost his all at the gambling table. With his thin fingers he pinched his scanty, registrar's moustache. His voice was barely audible. "The only thing I need is the poison." He was concerned not for his life, but for his death.

In actual fact many things were needed: (a) organised tracking, (b) a flat, (c) a gun, (d) a getaway horse, (e) a driver. Mikhailov had all this in mind and realised that nothing could be done without the society's help, but he clearly foresaw that to obtain such help would be incredibly difficult. After all, the society was moving towards its final split. But what he expected was nothing compared to the opposition and hostility he encountered.

Rodionych was almost threatening to kill this "destroyer of the people's cause" with his own hands. Kvyatkovsky blazed at him, "We can shoot too, you know!" At one point Mikhailov regretted having brought up the subject, then realised that it

would be better to have it out here and now. They demanded to know the name. Mikhailov would not tell them. Plekhanov, Ignatov and particularly Rodionych boiled with anger against this man, although all they knew about him was that he would be risking his life, facing torture and death.

Ignatov said, "I know who it is—Goldenberg!"

"He's mad!" Rodionych shouted. "He ought to be tied up and carried out of Petersburg by main force! In any case, whether the attempt succeeds or not, the whole movement will be smashed. Mark my words. I'm warning all of you! That path will lead us to destruction."

"And you, who only a month ago executed Reinstein, can say that?"

"Yes, I can! I say it, I who executed Reinstein! And just because I know what it is to be an executioner, I say it's disastrous!" He himself looked like a madman at that moment. "And won't hesitate to...."

Zundelevich, cool and composed as ever, nudged Mikhailov under the table and whispered, "Let them think it's Goldenberg. Don't deny it."

It was decided that in view of the differences of opinion no help should be given by the society, but some of its members, such as Mikhailov, Kvyatkovsky or Morozov, could if they wished help on a private basis. In addition, all "illegals" were to leave Petersburg a few days before the attempt. At the end of March, the exodus began. Solovyov was supplied with poison, a revolver and heavy cartridges; they told the man in the shop they were needed for bear hunting.

All other help—the getaway horse, the secret flat and so on—Solovyov refused. He spent the night of April 1st at Mikhailov's.

It was the best night he was to know before dying. Clear and moonlit. They made the stove really hot, opened the window and talked quietly. No one could hear. Besides, what did they talk about? Only about the lives they had lived, their childhood, parents, friends. They recalled the Saratov exiles. It was not long since they had all been near one another, Mikhailov in the village of Sinenkiye near Saratov with the Old Believers, and Solovyov, a volost registrar in the Volsky Uyezd. They had shared their dreams, hopes and fanatical belief in the healing and ancient wisdom of the people. Mikhailov had dreamed of a new, rationalist sect and admired the teachers of

schism; Solovyov had talked of a life "according to justice", of the folk wisdom that was to be found in those dark huts, in the very midst of the people. And yet before the year was out, here they were both in this hated Sodom, because nothing could be done and there was only one solution—to blow it up! That would clear the air and then, perhaps, all Russian life would take a different turn. There was no other way of avenging their friends, no other way of wresting the people out of their state of torpor, out of their wallowing somnolence, out of the tainted dreariness that had lasted a thousand years. They did not speak of this because too much had been said about it already; the whole thing was clear, obvious, it boiled down to *only one thing*.

Solovyov said that what hurt him most was the suffering he would inevitably inflict on his parents. The old couple were still alive and lived in St. Petersburg. He had said good-bye to them on Friday, telling them that he was going to Moscow. Nobody would explain to them; they wouldn't understand anyway. His father was a collegiate registrar, a medical assistant in some department attached to the court, he lived in constant fear of damaging the health of some important personage, shuddered over the smallest mistakes and incidents; and here was his son with a huge revolver for the assassination of....

He was about nine years older than Mikhailov, but to Mikhailov now he seemed younger. He had shaved off his beard two days ago. After all, life was over. There was nothing before him, neither wife nor children, nor old age, nor love. Mikhailov still hoped that he had a future.

Mikhailov had never known what it was to feel weaker than the person he was with. There had always been a sense of being stronger, firmer on his feet, bound to carry the heavier load. Only on that night....

Solovyov seemed to understand this and suddenly he smiled. A little wry smile in that scanty moustache.

"Don't look at me as if I'm a Christian martyr going to the slaughter. It'll be the same for you. If not tomorrow, then the day after."

"Yes, that's so," Mikhailov responded. And he felt better.

"And another thing. It's a nasty thought, a disgusting thought, but you can't get away from it. It has been hovering in my mind like a...." He snatched at the air as if beating off a

wasp. "Suppose it's all in vain? What if nothing comes of it? Will it always be like this? The whole world just the same, only *without* me.... Then what's it all for?"

Mikhailov said nothing. He could not dispose of this doubt, such a human doubt in the face of death; nor could he affirm it. He could do nothing. He had to remain silent.

"No, that's impossible. Stupid nonsense! It's not even a thought; it's a provocation born of fear." Solovyov had not expected Mikhailov to speak. He was talking to himself. "Man is so tied to the earth that he is ready to deceive himself unconsciously. I am not afraid of death; that's something I know for certain. And yet I am afraid, I'm afraid; that's something that I feel. And that's why I can't help speaking out these thoughts.... Here's another thing that worries me. The ancient Christians that were thrown to the lions in the arena—somewhere at the bottom of their madness, their faith, their readiness to suffer, was there not just a little drop of vanity? It's bitter, that drop. Oh no, I have none, nature never gave me any! Even when I was studying in the law school.... After all, when you come down to it, if there is a drop of vanity and if nothing blows up, and everything stays as before—then what was it all for? All that trouble for nothing."

Mikhailov held his peace. Solovyov was also silent for a while, then asked, "Will you be there tomorrow morning?"

He was there and on the pavement leading from the Choristers' Bridge to Palace Square he saw Solovyov, a tall figure in his official's peaked cap and cockade and long overcoat, shooting at the tsar. The tsar ran, dodging from side to side, and Solovyov fired again and again, missing all the time. Then they pounced on him and dragged him to the ground. Someone was beating him with a sabre. People shouted.

On Sunday, the first day of Easter, Nikolai Vasilyevich Kletochnikov was out walking on the Nevsky with his new acquaintance Chernyshev. They were calling at the porter-houses. There had been no getting out of it. Chernyshev had been pestering him since Friday, ever since he had heard about the bonus of thirty rubles Nikolai Vasilyevich had received from his chief. The fact was that for a whole week now Nikolai Vasilyevich had been in a wonderful new job; he was now a copyist in the secret department. This was a great improve-

ment! The work was more congenial, the place was quiet, only three people in the room, whereas in the detectives' office there had always been a lot of noise, pushing and shoving, the air thick with smoke, agents darting about, banging doors and, what was more, you could never be sure of what might be said to you from one minute to the next, or where you would be sent. Unquestioning obedience was expected. But the others liked it, you could tell from their faces. They positively enjoyed being on their feet all day, trotting about like old Ned; no loitering on the way, no time for dinner, just a gulp of vodka or a pie somewhere, and the chance of pocketing a government ruble or two. God, what a time he had had in those two months until Gospodin Kirillov took thought and realised that everyone has his own natural talents. Nikolai Vasilyevich, for instance, was a dunce at this kind of thing. But his handwriting was superb, diamond-fine. And with some insistence, although quite modestly and almost casually, he had tried to suggest that he would never make a good agent, but on the writing side it would be a different story. Permission was given. As of the end of March, starting on Monday, Nikolai Vasilyevich was to be a copyist in the secret department. As yet he was only on contract, but they had promised to consider the matter of his joining the staff. He had even been given a special allowance—three ten-ruble notes, which was a tidy sum.

Chernyshev sat in the same room with him. A small man with a vast fund of impudence. Rather plump and still young, with strange eyes that seemed to be looking different ways, one of them greenish, the other blue.

First he would look at you with his blue eye, joking all the time, talking a lot of nonsense, then he would latch on to you with the green one—and it made you shiver. He had been a real pest about the outing. It wasn't fair not to share your luck with your friends, like a wretched heathen. If you, Nikolai Vasilyevich, are a proper Orthodox Christian, it's your duty to care for your friends. You can't just grab your thirty bucks and creep off home to that dreadful bachelor's den of yours-who ever heard of such a thing!

So he had to put up with the man's company, listening to him, spouting rubbish himself and treating him to drinks; they stopped at every porter-house on the right-hand side going down from the station. It was a fine, warm evening with a true

festive feeling in the air. People were out walking, the porter-houses were crowded and gay; tipsy officials, factory workers in bowler hats, shop assistants, young ladies, carriages racing each other down the street, shouts, helter-skelter, splashes of black mud from under the wheels, and from the upper floors of the big restaurants the sound of music. Nikolai Vasilyevich did some drinking on his own account, two, three, four, even five glasses, so as not to offend or annoy his companion. Moselwein, German porter, rowan-flavoured vodka and a cucumber to go with it, so his head began to swell slightly, his brain swam and an enjoyably gallant feeling overcame him. Here it was, the real Petersburg life, the golden dream! But underneath he was still aware of the man beside him—what was he really like? There could be no good people in that nest of reptiles. This fat fellow, also a bachelor, was in no hurry to go home and looked as if he had every intention of drinking the whole of his colleague's allowance.

Nikolai Vasilyevich set a limit—six rubles. Even that was sheer frivolity and would have to last for the next six months. He was only doing it because he couldn't refuse without arousing suspicion. Chernyshev was cursing someone in a disgruntled, senseless way with drunken persistence. At first Nikolai Vasilyevich could not grasp who it was, then he realised it must be Wolf, the head of the desk. "He's a toad, a filthy turncoat. You'd better beware of him, he spies on people. Did you hear that? Keep away from him. My advice is worth listening to...." Nikolai Vasilyevich nodded and murmured his agreement.

And all at once Chernyshev fixed that greenish eye on him and hissed in an icy tone, "And I know all about you, Kletochnikov. You can't hide the tiniest little thing from me."

"What is there to know?" Nikolai Vasilyevich laughed. "I'm not the secretive kind."

"I know all your secrets."

"Well, good luck to you then."

"Ah, so that's your answer?" Chernyshev sounded annoyed, but with his blue eye, the cheerful one, he was already joking and playing the fool. "Who's got a sweetheart that lives on Liteiny Avenue? Is she pretty? Has she got a friend? Tell her to introduce me to her friend. I need a friend myself."

Nikolai Vasilyevich countered with a joke, but a shiver went down his spine. Was the man just chattering or had he really

smelled a rat? There was no one there you could trust, they were all creeping reptiles, writhing and twisting together. Perhaps he was not really drunk and had no desire at all to be pub-crawling with Kletochnikov on a fine Sunday evening, but Gospodin Kirillov had commanded it? A week ago, as soon as he was transferred to his copyist's post, Pyotr Ivanovich had told him to visit a new apartment, where there lived an unattached young lady, Natalya Nikolaevna. He was to be a friend of hers. This would be quite the usual thing and surprise no one. Nikolai Vasilyevich liked the idea very much. The young lady was a quiet, sweet creature, very pale, and while she sat on the sofa with a book he and Pyotr Ivanovich talked in the other room. But, in fact, the lady did not live here, on Liteiny, but in quite a different street.

The unpleasant sensation cleared his head.

"There are no young ladies that I know of on the Liteiny, more's the pity," he said with a sigh.

"Where then?"

"Nowhere. I'm no woman chaser, and as for their being interested in me...."

Chernyshev at once began urging him with extraordinary persistence and enthusiasm to meet an acquaintance of his called Richter, in a certain *establishment.* Nikolai Vasilyevich only just managed to get out of it, whereupon, having begged a lone of three rubles and promised on his word of honour to pay it back, Chernyshev took himself off.

The next day, Monday, April 2nd, Nikolai Vasilyevich could scarcely crawl out of bed. His head was splitting and the time was already past ten in the morning. He was not obliged to go to work that day, but on Good Friday he had agreed with his superior that he would come in and copy a few sheets. The task he had been given was a huge one. Out of all the department's alphabetical lists he had to make one general list covering the last ten years. And there was a mountain of ordinary copying to do besides. When would he manage it? But what really attracted him was the restful desertedness and quiet that he could expect to find in the office on such a day. He would be able to copy the things that really mattered. And there was plenty. Late on Friday a list of seventy-six suspects had been delivered and there had been no time to copy it. But now—if only he could sleep, take some tablets and go back to bed; he limped along, aching and wretched, wondering to

himself, "What kind of people must they be who drink every day? What kind of health must they have!"

Strange things were happening round the building at the Chain Bridge. Carriages and cabs were driving up one after the other, people jumped out and hurried to the door. Nikolai Vasilyevich saw that they were agents; some he even recognised. Why were they being sent for? The hall was crowded with officials whispering to each other excitedly; all faces shared the same expressions of fright or sorrowful enigma. Aha, and here was Wolf! He ran in with his eyes bulging, "An attempt on the Sovereign.... Thank God, yes.... He's alive.... They've got the one who did it...." It had happened between nine and ten in the morning. The whole detective department had been summoned. Clerks and copyists were not needed, of course.

"How about you? Didn't you know?"

"I didn't know! Of course, I didn't know a thing!" the dumbfounded Nikolai Vasilyevich stammered, pressing both hands to his chest. "I'm busy with my alphabetical lists.... Heavens above, on a holy day like this too! What wickedness!..."

He staggered away along the corridor, clutching at the wall. The stagger was quite genuine; his head was spinning and there was a filthy taste in his mouth. But he could not sit still in his empty room. His hand was trembling and he could not use his pen properly. Once again he went downstairs; the crowd was even denser, many of the faces had a bleary, morning-after look; someone was trying to disperse it.

"Gentlemen, will the people who have been sent for, please, go to their own rooms!... All the others will go home! Don't interfere, gentlemen."

A sobbing voice cried out, "In honour of this miraculous deliverance.... Hurrah!"

Nikolai Vasilyevich cheered with everyone else. His heart was thumping. A terrible thought had occurred to him. Who had done the shooting? Could it have been?... A messenger rushed in from the governor's headquarters with the latest news: the would-be assassin had been restored to consciousness and stated his name as Ivan Osipov Sokolov. He had given no further information. He had been caught and beaten with a sabre by Kokh, an officer of the royal bodyguard. The tsar was not even wounded. The scoundrel who had attacked

him was about thirty years of age, fair moustache, fantastic self-control. When he came round the first thing he did was to ask for a cigarette.

The more Nikolai Vasilyevich heard the more convinced he became of the awful truth; it must be Pyotr Ivanovich! He suddenly decided to go straight to the residence of the governor. But he realised at once that this was sheer madness; no one would let him in and it was quite impossible. While he was dithering helplessly between one floor and the other, he suddenly noticed his superior officers marching down the main staircase in a wedge-shaped formation; at the thin end of the wedge was the assistant chief, retinue general of the royal suite Cherevin, in full dress uniform with Gospodin Kirillov and Cherevin's adjutant, a captain of the gendarmes, behind him, and behind them, two more officers in plain clothes. All of a sudden Nikolai Vasilyevich darted up to Gospodin Kirillov (what madness, what besotted bluster!) and muttered, croaked or perhaps even shouted:

"Permit me to assist, Grigory Grigoryevich! I might have seen him somewhere and be able to identify him...."

Gospodin Kirillov dropped behind the wedge for a second and drove a metallic glance into him.

"Where?"

"At the Sands, in the students' rooms there; that is, I mean...."

"Follow me!"

General Cherevin and his adjutant took the first carriage, Gospodin Kirillov and one of the plainclothesmen stepped into the second and, at a signal given by Gospodin Kirillov's white glove, Nikolai Vasilyevich squeezed in after him. The carriage smelled of perfume, ladies' perfume, so it seemed to Nikolai Vasilyevich. He also caught a whiff of "Greko" cream. The plainclothesman, evidently a high-ranking agent, lost no time in making his report. Professor Trapp, the pharmacist, had received a written warning from that committee of scoundrels that there must be no torture of the arrested man during interrogation; for anyone who ignored their warning the penalty would be death. Gospodin Kirillov snatched the paper that the agent held out to him and scanned it rapidly with a sneer and haughty flashing of his eyes.

"Trying to scare us, the scoundrels! Oh, the maniacs! The treacherous beasts! Well, the old man is there already, at

Zurov's house, and he's doing all that needs to be done. In fact, he has done the main thing already—saved the villain from death. The poison didn't work...."

Nikolai Vasilyevich felt his heart contract, felt as if he was choking. If only they would arrive and he could get a breath of air. The horses swung round sharply, slowed their pace and at last the carriage stopped. They were met at the entrance to the residence of the governor. Their guide conducted them through the anteroom and dining room into a small corridor, from which a door led to a back staircase. They went up to the next floor and entered a door marked "Detention Department". This gave access to a long corridor like a gallery, with windows all down one side and a white wall punctuated with occasional doors on the other. The nearest door was wide-open and the room was crowded with armed soldiers in greatcoats; this was evidently the guardroom. A blond well-groomed officer hurrying ahead of the general, for some reason in a frock-coat, darted to the next door and opened it with the words, "He is here!"

Nikolai Vasilyevich, who was behind everyone, remained standing on the threshold, too weak to step into the room. Why had he come here? He would not be able to betray his sympathy by so much as a word or gesture. But the madness still gripped him, urging him on irresistibly. He must see this amazing man who had won his heart so quickly, and *tell him* if only with a *glance.* He felt himself beginning to shake all over, his mind blurred, his legs giving way under him, and yet he still stepped into the room and found himself among dozens of people—civilians, policemen, military in adjutants' uniform. By the wall on the left, on a leather sofa in a reclining position was—thank God!—quite a different person. No, it was not Pyotr Ivanovich, not Pyotr Ivanovich at all! A tall, thin man with long fair hair, noticeably matted. The eyes were bleared, the face haggard. There were splashes on the floor, and in a basin, vomit with blood in it. Someone said an anti-toxin had been administered. Nikolai Vasilyevich squeezed his way through to Gospodin Kirillov and explained in a shaking voice that the man was a stranger to him.

Gospodin Kirillov appeared not to have heard.

He must get away from here. In the corridor a young officer of the gendarmes was relating to an attentive group round him how he had struck down the man as he was shooting with a

blow of his sword. "Down he went and then we pitched into him!... Gave him a good clobbering, I must say.... Look at this!" he displayed his bent sword. "It won't go into the sheathe! I've busted the thing!" His voice was exultant. Someone promised calmly, "Never mind, they'll give you another. Out of solid gold...." A man wearing the uniform of the civil service and judge's insignia came hurrying briskly down the corridor with a brief-case under his arm. Nikolai Vasilyevich told himself he had been here long enough. He must get away.

By the morning of the next day they had made the assassin confess—Nikolai Vasilyevich received the information as soon as he arrived at the office—that his real name was Alexander Konstantinovich Solovyov, a collegiate secretary from the nobility of the Petersburg Province; his father was Konstantin Grigoryevich, his mother Tatyana Alekseyevna, and he also had a brother who was on the Administration Committee of the Senate, a sister, and so on. He gave detailed and accurate evidence about himself and would say nothing about anybody else. Evidently someone had identified him the day before. The idea of regicide had, so he alleged, occurred to him after the attempt on the life of the chief. On Easter Saturday he had visited Palace Square to see what direction the tsar took when out walking; on Sunday he had kept away; and on Monday he had made the attempt on the tsar's life. On the night of the 1st he had strolled about the Nevsky, met a prostitute and spent the night with her somewhere in that street. He had bought his official peaked cap in the Gostiny Dvor. The revolver had been presented to him by an acquaintance whose name he refused to disclose. The poison, potassium cyanide, he had obtained in Nizhny Novgorod about eighteen months ago and had kept it in a bottle. On the eve of the attempt he had poured it into a nutshell, and, when he was being beaten, had fallen flat on his face and bitten through the shell, which was in his mouth already; another nutshell, similarly prepared, had been found in the pocket of his overcoat when he was searched.

Pyotr Ivanovich listened to this information with an expressionless face, neither interrupting nor asking questions. It was impossible to tell whether it was news to him or not.

Only at the mention of the prostitute did he give a feeble smile and wave two fingers slightly as if to indicate that this was quite untrue.

"Yes. That's what I was afraid of. The poison must have lost its strength. It had been kept too long."

Nikolai Vasilyevich then handed over the list of seventy-five suspected persons and recounted from memory the arrests and searches that had been made during the night; fifty-two people had been searched and most of them arrested. They included Doctor Weimar, the barrister Olkhin, all the relatives and former acquaintances of Solovyov. Janitors and doormen had been shown photographs of Solovyov and Mirsky and asked whether they had been seen visiting any of their residents or tenants.

Natalya Nikolayevna then invited them into the other room, where she had laid the table for tea. They had Easter cake and sweet raisin cream, which was still very tasty though it had been made two days before. Natalya Nikolayevna had made it herself. Gradually they relaxed and the conversation began to flow. Pyotr Ivanovich told them how he had lived among the dissenters and Old Believers, and about their interesting way of praying. In one of the houses where he had lodged the mistress had put up the following composition framed among the icons on the wall; it was entitled "News of Modern Times" and consisted of various eccentric sayings so aptly put that Pyotr Ivanovich had remembered them and was able to recite them one after the other. They went something like this. Bliss had been taken to heaven, love murdered, truth had left the world, justice was on the run. And so on. All sorts of amusing things. Credit was bankrupt. Innocence was on trial. Reason had been sent to do hard labour. Law had been dispossessed. And finally, most interesting of all, only patience was left, and that, too, was at breaking point.

They all laughed. No, there was nothing to beat the wisdom of the people. No writer could do better. Natalya Nikolayevna also related how she had lived "among the people", working as a doctor's assistant in the Novokhopersky Uyezd. She had heard many amusing things, but there had been as much that was sad. And for a time it had seemed to Nikolai Vasilyevich that Petersburg with its searches, its fear, and the imminent execution of that poor unfortunate man, was no longer lurking in the background, and there were just the three of them sitting at table by candlelight.... How good, how wonderful it had been!

He was reluctant to leave, but he had to. Pyotr Ivanovich

left first, at about ten, but Nikolai Vasilyevich, as a friend of the house, had to stay a little longer. "You must go at a quarter past eleven, no earlier and no later," Pyotr Ivanovich told him. "If you go earlier it won't look convincing enough, and any later may arouse suspicion." What an extremely clever man he was!

And so the days went by, the dreadful period of trial was over, Easter had passed and once again he was back in the office; agents' reports, copying, memorising, constant fear, but now he had got used to it and it had become like an old pain, and every morning there was that fool Chernyshev with his silly squalid jokes.

"You have a very dull sex life, Nikolai Vasilyevich!"

At the end of April, Pyotr Ivanovich said he would soon be going away for a month or so. Most likely to the south, to his own country and the Old Believers. He appointed no one in his place. Life became rather boring. The only joy was the coming of spring.

VOICE OF M. F. FROLENKO

I, Frolenko, alias "Mikhailo", invited Andrei Zhelyabov to the secret congress in Lipetsk. And it was then that his star began to rise on our horizon. From being a little known provincial rebel (not even a rebel—a Narodnik, a dreamer!) he was instantly transformed into an ataman, a terrorist leader. It all began with the affair of the bull that I have related. I couldn't prove it but I sensed the rebel in him. After all, I knew him a bit better than others. I used to visit him in his Odessa flat. We would talk, bawl at each other, sing our Ukrainian songs, and at those "gatherings of the clan" I heard tales of all kinds of mad escapades, tricks, battles with the police and other Cossack exploits. He liked showing off a bit, doing things with a swagger. He had a chivalrous nature, and chivalry always involves a certain degree of bragging. And then I heard the story of the bull.

One phrase has stuck in my mind, "I realised that there just couldn't be any bull in the world that was terrible enough to be afraid of."

When I was called urgently to Petersburg after Solovyov's attempt to discuss the question of holding a congress, the city

was in quite a state of daze and panic. The government was frantic. Just like an enraged bull, charging about, tossing liberals, students, even completely innocent people, anyone that got near its horns. A system of military provinces had been introduced. The stream of arrests, searches, banishments was in full spate. And, of course, the "villagers", the ones who wanted to go among the people, began to curse us. "There's your Solovyov! That's what it all leads to. All our work has gone overboard." And we replied, "Did you, kind friends, hope that the enemy would not resist? Aren't you clever! Of course, he'll resist; of course, he'll rant and rage; of course, he'll kill us. But we have the solution: we shall kill him." These hasty discussions that boiled up when two or at the most four got together were no good to anybody and only deepened the confusion. We all had to assemble! All the "villagers" and the "townsmen" and the rebels had to be brought together. They had to make their positions clear to each other, and then organise properly or make a final and complete break. But where? First we thought of Tambov, then decided on Voronezh, where there was a splendid monastery, the Mitrofanovsky, that drew hordes of visitors in summer. But before Voronezh all of us supporters of the new method, that is, terror—Tigrych, the Sparrow, the Janitor, Alexander, Zund and a few others—resolved to meet separately. The place we chose was Lipetsk, near Voronezh, not a bad town either, convenient for our purposes because it was a health resort and also had plenty of visitors.

I was asked who could be invited from the south. Not to Voronezh, but to Lipetsk. What we need, they said, are some loyal lads who will support our ideas, so that we can build up a majority for Voronezh. I named Zhelyabov. He was known from the days of the Big Trial and everyone exclaimed in surprise, "But he's an inveterate Narodnik!"

I said that was quite true, but that in his heart he was a rebel. How had he ever shown his rebel qualities? In no way; that was the point. I had no proof. In his youth there had been some innocent student revolts in the University, then his propagandist circles, then the trial, where he had behaved very quietly and tamely, although he had refused to appear in court. But so had nearly everyone else. And yet I sensed it, I was ready to swear that he was a most daring rebel! In order to convince my comrades I gave them just one instance of *rebel-*

lion—the affair of Styopka the bull. I had heard it from Andrei himself. One day he was working in the fields and suddenly there was a frightened cry from his mother. He looked round and saw the terrible black bull Styopka—the whole village feared it—charging straight at his mother. Andrei tore a stake out of the fence, threw it at the bull hitting its legs. The bull fell and that gave his mother the few seconds she needed to escape.

That was the whole story, as Andrei told it to me. He said that a terrible almost supernatural fear for his mother forced him to make that instantaneous decision, nothing else would have saved her. I, of course, retold the story as a heroic saga, something about his having picked up a fork and brandished it at the bull and the bull having taken fright and run away. And strangely enough, the "tale of the black bull" had an effect. "All right, bring him along," they told me.

Some people afterwards talked about "toreadors' tales", as if I had presented him as a toreador, which he wasn't. But it was I who turned out right in the end. He *was* a great toreador, one of the greatest in history.

In Odessa, I sought out Zhelyabov and asked if he was prepared to join us in continuing Solovyov's cause. He replied that he was. But when he heard about the Lipetsk gathering, about the setting up of a permanent organisation, meaning that there would be other operations, a lot of them, he hesitated and said he would have to think about it.

We thought it over together for a long time, long into the night, and reached the following decision. He was willing to undertake one act of terror and would stay with us until that act was performed. Then he would be free and could leave us, if he wished. He demanded that we should promise him this freedom. So with the very grave, mysterious air of a party man I gave him the promise, although we had never held on to anyone by force. I think this reservation—about the single act and the right to leave—was just an unconscious trick, a compromise with his populist conscience because his real conclusion had long been maturing in his mind. Soon the Janitor appeared in Odessa—about the middle of May, I think. I introduced them and left. I had to go and collect the money obtained by the undermining of the Kherson State Treasury.

And when we met in June in Lipetsk I hardly recognised him; he was a full-fledged terrorist! And not just a terrorist,

but a dedicated theoretician and advocate of terror. It seems to me that his greatest strength as an individual was the strength of his rationality. He always thought things out, right through to the end. If you did this, your next step would have to be that. And if it was that, then such and such was inevitable, and such and such would require that, and so on right through to the logical conclusion. Once he had agreed to undertake a single act, this act would have to be properly prepared for. It meant creating an organisation, and once an organisation was created—and so on and so forth. And in the last year, when we lived desperately and blindly with a kind of doomed frivolity—I am speaking of the winter prior to March 1st, there was no other way, otherwise we should have gone mad—he still went on digging down to the bottom, to the final borderline. And he saw that borderline. He spoke quite calmly of how they would hang him and actually described the execution. Sonya was beside herself! She battered at him with her little fist and told him to stop, but he couldn't change himself, couldn't stop thinking things through *to the end.*

Chapter Three

It was in the air; there had to be an answer, a rebuff, something had to happen and someone somewhere must be preparing to make it. So when Mikhailo Frolenko arrived with the proposal that he should go to Lipetsk he was not surprised. Nor was he surprised that in the whole of Odessa Mikhailo had chosen to call on him first, and then on Kolya Kolodkevich. Only after some time had passed did he ask himself, "Why did he come to me? Surely the devils know I'm a socialist, a Narodnik!" But here was a great temptation. An irresistible temptation. And Mikhailo, with his brilliant cunning, had guessed right and hit the target.

Everything that had been slowly simmering in the ancient Russian cauldron—the malice of the authorities, the mutual embitterment, the refusal to make concessions, the desire for revenge—was now boiling up furiously and bloodily. What use was propaganda? What use were settlements? Now it was a fight to the death. At the beginning of April, just at the time of Solovyov's shot at the tsar, a workers' revolt broke out in Rostov; police stations were overrun and the police beaten up.

In mid-April, the military district court of St. Petersburg assembled to try Second Lieutenant Dubrovin, who had resisted arrest and, in general, appeared to be a man of astonishing valour; on April 20th, Dubrovin was executed. For what? Simply for resisting arrest, for refusing to go meekly like a lamb to the slaughter. But why had they arrested him? Certain letters had been found in Malinovskaya's flat; nothing important, mere nonsense really. The death penalty for writing letters. Swift, unwavering, in true military style—that was the great thing.

The "military" style had become the ruling principle since Solovyov's attempt. On May 7th, the trial began of Valerian Osinsky in Kiev, and a week later Valerian and two of his comrades, Brandtner and Antonov, were hanged. It was said that the court had sentenced them to be shot, but the tsar himself had intervened to demand the scaffold. In mid-May, the trial of the Izbitsky brothers began in Kiev, and on the 28th, Solovyov was executed. Can't they understand, these supreme idiots, these rancid semi-German minds, these *oprichniks* with general's epaulettes, that blood will beget even more blood, and that it will descend on their own heads? No, they cannot understand; they have neither the strength nor the intelligence to step over the spite and bitterness of today and see into the future. Are these the minds of statesmen? All Russia can see that the pressure has to be let off, people must be allowed to enjoy at least a little freedom, to learn respect for the opinion of others. But no, they have dug their heels in and stand with stolid indifference, not yielding an inch; all they can do is suppress and hang and send people to Siberia. They want to prove that they are hanging brigands and murderers. Fools, you will prove nothing, you riders on the backs of the people! You are hanging *the best and most unselfish* of all Russian people, and for that you will soon have to pay the penalty.

The wave reached Odessa. Sofya Leshern, a friend of Valerian, was mocked during her trial, and when the verdict of "guilty" was read out they staged a disgusting exhibition. They went through the whole ritual of execution. Sofya was dressed in burial garments, her head was covered with a hood and the noose knotted round her neck, and only after the sentence had been read out was the noose removed and the prisoner told that she had been pardoned; the death penalty had been commuted to hard labour for life. They did not know that this

was the worst of all punishments. She had longed to die together with her Valerian, and the news that she was to live threw her into a state of despair. To mock a woman at such a moment. Could that be forgiven? Did they think that all these abominations would be forgotten? In April, so Mikhailo related, Valerian had passed a letter from prison. It was very gay, bright, in his usual manner, and yet it assumed the worst. "I don't know myself what charms the future has in store for me; everything depends on the political situation at the given moment, and after Solovyov's attempt it doesn't look very rosy." Mikhailo had memorised it word for word: "In any case it'll be a penal prison, or perhaps the rope." Well, he had guessed right, but there was one thing that he could never have guessed—that during the execution a band would be playing "Kamarinskaya". This was a new trick of the hangman's trade. It was done for the sake of the crowd, to stop them grumbling. After all, why should they—it was just one brigand less!

The crowd as usual stood in silence. The hanging, so they say, was badly done. Valerian writhed and struggled and was a long time dying, and a colonel, the scoundrel, told the crowd that this was because he had refused the services of a priest. Some arrests were made. They say seven secondary schoolboys were taken in charge for crying. And some of the officers and men on parade fainted. So that was the crowd's answer, the best that could be hoped for—tears and swooning.... But, oh God, what else could one expect? What could one do with this unfortunate country?

Tears and swooning, but not because they sympathised and understood but merely out of pity, at seeing such a terrible sight. If the colonel himself had been hung, they would also have wept.

In recent months, living among the workers in Moldavanka Street and in the doss-houses of dockland, he had heard plenty. Dark waters ran in these men's souls! A docker, from the Ukraine, gave the following explanation of Solovyov's shot. It's the gentry, them sons of bitches, what's angry with the tsar, our father, because he give the peasants their freedom. But, Andrei argued, that freedom has stripped you naked, you've had to leave home and family, and come begging to town. "It was the gentry that stripped me; the tsar gave me freedom!"

One day he had heard a peasant holding forth in a tavern. "When the revolutionaries decided to kill the tsar," the man was saying, "they sent an order round to all their people to wreck the police stations and butcher all the high-ups, and if Solovyov had killed the tsar the same thing as happened in Rostov would have happened all over Russia. But Solovyov missed. So they sent an order from Petersburg to stand by for a while, and in Rostov they must have been late with the message or forgotten to send it, and that's why there was a revolt." His companions listened to him gravely, apparently believing every word. This legend that he had overheard somehow cheered him and reinforced his hopes. In these naive words there was a programme! Talking to the workers he had heard remarks of the following kind. Yes, the ones who do this shooting are learned men, of course, we respect them, but they are "working for their own ends, and we have our own ends". In a doss-house he had once heard two men whispering on the neighbouring bunks; one was telling a story and the other was asking questions and gasping in amazement.

"There's more in this than meets the eye," the story-teller was saying. "There's no smoke without a fire. Do you think Karakozov fired his shot just because he thought he would? I've heard tell as how, when Karakozov was under interrogation, Muravyov came to him in prison and said, 'You've got to tell me everything—you know I'm a Russian bear!' And Karakozov says to him, 'Well, I'm a polar bear', and then he told him summat. What he told him, I couldn't say, I wouldn't tell you a lie. But Muravyov, of course, he reported this to the tsar and the tsar ordered him never to tell that secret to anyone, keep it dark till your dying day, he says; and if you don't, you'd better look out. And then he shows him a silken cord. That's what you'll get, my dear friend, if you babble. So nobody knows exactly what it was all about. But there was summat...."

Someone weaving fantasies, letting his imagination roam, trying to guess and understand.

Mikhailo stated a very simple thought. He was no theoretician but a pure pragmatist, with a splendidly accurate practical mind. With his powers of calculation he ought to have been engaged in commerce, in world trade rather than making a revolution.

"You've got to think this out sensibly," he said. "We're all

going to be killed, aren't we? There's no other possibility. We shall die, and that's a fact. But we can die for a mere nothing, or we can die doing something big. So the obvious thing is to do something big."

He showed them a copy of the *Land and Freedom Newssheet* that had come out about six weeks ago. It carried the leading article "On Political Killings", which had caused a storm. It had been written by one of the editors, Kolya ("Sparrow") Morozov. Andrei remembered him well from the days of the Big Trial, a thin young fellow in spectacles, who looked like a pimply high-school boy spoiled by home upbringing. And here, all of a sudden, this daring carbonari style! No wonder people were worked up and Georges Plekhanov had declared the article "illegal" because it had got into the paper without his sanction and he was also one of the editors. There was a real row! Tigrych, the Janitor and Sparrow were in favour of the article; the "villagers" Georges and Rodionych, and Ignatov as well, were against. It was really because of this article and also the arguments over the Solovyov affair that the need had arisen to get together and have it out, to have a real rip-roaring row. So:

> "Political killing is, above all, an act of vengeance. Only when it has avenged the comrades that have perished can a revolutionary organisation look its enemies straight in the eye; only then can it rise to the moral heights that a champion of freedom must attain to be able to lead the masses. Political killing is the only means of self-defence in present conditions, and one of the best ways of agitating. By striking at the very centre of the government organisation it shakes the whole system with terrifying force. The blow radiates instantly throughout the state like an electric current and disrupts all its functions. When the advocates of freedom are few in number, they always shut themselves up in secret societies. This secrecy endows them with tremendous strength. It has given mere handfuls of daring men the ability to fight millions of organised but overt enemies.... But when to this secrecy is added political killing as a systematic means of struggle, such people will become truly terrible to their enemies. The latter will live in constant fear of their lives, never knowing from one minute to the next when or whence vengeance will come. Political killing is the realisation of

> the revolution in the present. The 'unknown and anonymous' underground force puts these high-ranking criminals on trial and condemns them to death and the powers-that-be feel the ground giving way beneath them, feel themselves tumbling from the pinnacles of their omnipotence into a dark and unknown abyss.... Who are they to fight? Who to protect themselves from? On whom should they vent their frenzied rage? Millions of bayonets, millions of slaves await just one order, a single motion of the hand.... At a single gesture they are ready to strangle and destroy thousands of their own brethren.... But against whom is it to be directed, this state power, so terrible in its discipline, created by centuries of all-corrupting effort? There is no one to be seen. No one knows whence the avenging hand appeared, and, having administered punishment, it has again vanished into the unknown whence it came.... Political killing is the weapon that our enemies fear most; it is a weapon against which the formidable armies and the legions of spies are powerless to help them. That is why the enemy fears it so much. That is why three or four successful political killings have forced our government to introduce martial law, reinforce the battalions of the gendarmerie, line the streets with Cossacks, post police officers in every village—in short, perform a *salto mortale* to which it was never compelled by years of propaganda, by centuries of Russian discontent, the rioting of students or the curses of the thousands of victims done to death in penal servitude and exile.... That is why we acknowledge political killing to be one of the principal means of struggle against despotism."

All this was true, but on this path there would be dangers. The first was that an excessive enthusiasm for killing would overshadow and perhaps totally eclipse the main task of preparing the people. The second was that these killings would inflame a lust for power, a desire to exercise a secret domination over everyone and everything, which could lead to a degeneration of the movement, to Nechayevism. Andrei told Mikhailo this in so many words. Mikhailo replied that the party had no intention of turning itself into a corporation of murderers, a factory for secret executions according to the Nechayev ideal; "Sparrow" had allowed himself to be carried away, he

was a romantic, a poet. This was a question of *one* killing. And perhaps it would be the last.

The last? Yes, the last, the ultimate, the killing to end all killings. They would become unnecessary. If Solovyov had not missed his target there might already, in May, have been a complete change throughout the country— a new government, a new system of state. The events in Rostov had shown that one small spark was enough to....

The last killing—what a tremendous temptation! And then would come the rule of reason. The triumph of justice. A society organised on the new or, to be more exact, the forgotten principles of true democracy. But there must be a push, a blow that would shake everything to the foundations.... And another thing: this blow would, of course, mean the destruction of the man who struck it, so what Andrei had told Mikhailo about his consenting to *one* killing on the condition of his being free to go afterwards if he so desired, was nonsense. He had realised that the moment he had said it. Where would he go? And where was he hoping to escape from? From under the wheels of a locomotive? No, there was no need to deceive himself—there would be no escape.

Mikhailo soon disappeared but was replaced by the Janitor, Alexander Mikhailov. Mikhailo had some complex matters to attend to in Odessa and in the south generally. Andrei surmised that it was something to do with obtaining money. Lizogub had been in prison for nine months now, but it had been possible to salvage some of his huge fortune through his manager—Drigo. Valerian had been in charge of this before his arrest, and now Mikhailov was trying to make contact with Drigo. But Drigo was being evasive, keeping out of sight, acting "disingenuously" as the Janitor put it, and it was not clear how to influence him, with tactful persistence or, perhaps, by giving him a scare? The Janitor was grim and angry. Andrei could see things were going badly, and just when money was needed, on the eve of the congress, because if it came to a split and a sharing of property, there would be nothing to share.

The Janitor gave no details of the operation, but one day at the end of May he turned up looking cheerful, and intimated that he had managed something. His face wore an expression of triumph and he even winked with a complacency that was not like him at all.

"What a business, eh! I'll tell you about it one day. All I know is that no one but your true and faithful servant could have pulled it off!"

Andrei had met many splendid people in his time, both in Odessa, beginning with Felix and the Zhebunevs, and during the Big Trial. He spotted them at once, made friends easily and parted with them just as quickly. But he had never known anything like this, such a feeling of complete trust from the very first moment. This lad, though he was about four years younger, in every respect, in physical toughness, thoughts, conversation, everything, and, above all, in some deep and basic attitude of mind, could have been Andrei's *alter ego.* They were all, of course, similar in a way; they all had roughly the same attitude of mind, but this man was somehow terribly close and yet.... And yet, there would have been little joy in meeting an exact copy of oneself, and luckily such horrifying things happened only in nightmares.

Mikhailov had tremendous practical ability. He took little interest in theory, avoided argument; he was a man of action, while Andrei was rather a man of thought. Mikhailov's practicality was astonishing, ever present. They met each other in the street and walked together through the town. He asked, "What's that square?" "Where does that street lead?" "Is there a communicating courtyard?" For some reason he was particularly interested in such courtyards. Andrei could understand such an interest, but in Petersburg—why here?

"You will be leaving here in a week, I believe?" On that first day they were still on formal terms, but at their next meeting they soon adopted the familiar forms of address, without any shyness, like two old friends. "I can't see why you need to know about Odessa's communicating courtyards."

"In the first place, I don't know whether I shall be leaving in a week or not. And secondly, it's a habit."

And the next time they met they walked to the port and he took some incredible route through the back yards, while Andrei, and old Odessa man, protested that there was no way through, it was a cul-de-sac but, to his shame, there was a way through and it turned out to be much shorter. He seemed to anatomise a street and see through houses. And another thing: he always saw everything that was happening there, the whole picture instantaneously and in detail.

They were walking down the boulevard one sultry evening;

the hot weather had started and the townspeople were out strolling on the circle between the Richelieu statue and the Duma. The two of them—Frolenko had left—were making their way through the crowd.

Suddenly the Janitor whispered, "See that spy standing there...."

Andrei glanced round and saw standing behind a bench on which people were sitting a man known in Odessa by the name of Kuzya. He was an impoverished landowner, a gambler at cards and on the billiard table, about whom it was indeed said that he had contacts with a certain esteemed organisation.

"How do you know?" Andrei asked.

"I don't. It's just a surmise."

"But, devil take it, you're right! How did you guess?"

"I can't explain. I have a nose for such gentlemen. You know, in all of them, even the most important and impressive, there is something slightly dog-like. And I sense it. Well, what I mean is, you can see it in their faces."

He was speaking seriously. Andrei smiled. The man looked like a country bumpkin but he could spot things. After spending a night or two in Andrei's flat he surprised him again.

"Don't you draw your curtains?" He looked dismayed, almost indignant. "You should do, without fail. I simply order you to. Sunlight damages the eyes and for us eyesight is top priority."

This was all fine and only to the good, and Andrei felt grateful to the Janitor for constantly teaching him these small revolutionary artifices, but at times he longed for something else—to talk seriously or, as he put it jokingly, about the *higher things*. For instance, what did the Land and Freedom people, the authors of these splendid articles about political killings, intend to do the day after the revolution, if it should be successful? What system of government did they plan to introduce? An Assembly of the Land? Popular representation? And what if the representatives of the people voted in favour of retaining the monarchy? At the present level of revolutionary awareness and with their pitiful experience, mostly forgotten, of democratic government, this was more than likely. What was to be done then? Mikhailov replied that they would obey the people's will. But.... He paused for a second, thinking, and then said triumphantly, "But we shall reserve the right to go underground again and fight for our ideals!"

He decided theoretical questions quickly, without going over the same ground time and again. Everything was clear to him. The main problem and difficulty was discipline and centralisation. That was another reason why the "villagers" kept complaining, because they were afraid of discipline, of subordination to the centre; and yet without discipline the party would fall to pieces. They would be merely slapping instead of punching.

Not long before they left for Lipetsk, at the beginning of June, an issue of *New Times* with a description of Solovyov's execution arrived in Odessa. They bought two copies, sat down on a remote bench on the embankment and started to read. The heat had suddenly abated, as it sometimes does in Odessa after the sultry days at the end of May; the sea was bright and dead calm. Fishing boats, a steamship under the blue and white flag of Greece, the wisps of fog on the horizon—nothing moved.

Both men read attentively without exchanging a word.

They had never before read—probably no one had ever printed, in the ordinary, censored press, such a thorough and detailed description of a *hanging*. The reporter noted the smallest details. What was the point of this scrupulous and dispassionate compilation, which resembled the accounts given by Marco Polo of the Chinese ceremonies and executions of the East? That was one thing they wanted to know. And besides, they were enthralled by these details, they could not tear their eyes away from the closely printed lines of type. Such interest—it left one's throat dry—was natural but unnecessary.

Half-way through, Mikhailov suddenly said with an angry sneer, "Oh, to the devil with this poor clown of a journalist! It's like a pig gazing at heaven!" He threw the paper aside. "They're stirring up these carnivorous appetites on purpose, the scoundrels. They're deliberately brutalising the people against us.... Stop it! That's enough!"

He tried to snatch Andrei's paper away but was held off by his elbow. They linked arms and started a tug-of-war, Andrei with his left, the other with his right, as though in jest but actually taking an interest in each other's strength. They strained and panted and were rather embarrassed to find that neither could shift the other.

"What a great strong oaf you are!"

"You're quite an ox yourself!"

Mikhailov suddenly removed his arm, and stood up, frowning and still red with exertion.

"All right, read that muck if you want to. You didn't know Alexander. But I did. And his family, his sister, his father. And I don't want to read that muck, that journalistic sadism."

"I'll read to the end," Andrei said. "One has to know these things."

"There is no need whatever to know that. No matter how you look at it," the Janitor said crossly. "Well, sit and read then, I'll be back in half an hour."

And he strode away. As his eyes scanned the lines of type Andrei thought, he's afraid I'll get scared and not go to Lipetsk after all. The Janitor had got used to these thoughts and had no wish to return to them because he had given them thorough consideration already. The main thing was to get used to such thoughts. Like a convict who got used to his chains and no longer noticed them. The main thing was to keep them in your head all the time, then the habit would form; then you could get used to anything, even to the fact that at a very early hour a dense mass of people gathered on the spacious field on the Middle Avenue side of Vasilyevsky Island. The earlier arrivals had occupied all the available walls and vantage points in the vicinity. Among the public, most of whom belonged to the lower orders of society, one could observe a fair number of women, some even accompanied by small children. Worthy women! Sweet little children! They, too, were developing a habit that would stand them in good stead later on. The scaffold itself that had been erected in the middle of Smolensk Field and could be seen by the naked eye from its furthest boundary consisted of a rectangular wooden platform 28 feet long and 16 feet wide. The scaffold was surrounded by an iron grille with only one opening, at the front, 2 feet wide. Attached to the base of the platform, in the middle, two poles 16 feet high were joined at the top by a crosspiece. To this crosspiece was attached a rope, not a very thick one, of the kind that is used for securing large trunks, about 1/3 of an inch in diameter. Large trunks for conveyance to another world.

The procession was headed by two columns of Lifeguards, a hundred in all, of the Cossack Ataman Regiment, followed by a company of Lifeguards of the Grenadier Regiment. Then came a chariot escorted by mounted gendarmes. The chariot

turned off the road on to the field in the direction of the scaffold. The troops in the outer line parted to admit the chariot to the square. The chariot drove up to the scaffold and stopped at the steps leading up to the platform. (Evidently the reporter specialised on military parades.) The so-called "chariot", drawn by two horses, was nothing but an ordinary Russian waggon with a ladder attached to the rear. Across the middle of the waggon stood a bench with four iron bars fixed to the back. And there he was! *Solovyov was seated on the bench with his back to the horses, his arms tied behind him and strapped to the bars.* He was wearing the dress usually reserved for prisoners of the privileged class, namely, a black coat of thick army cloth, a black peakless cap and white trousers tucked into the tops of his boots. On his chest there hung a large black board on which were written in white the words: State Criminal.... And what about the crowd? All these newspaper reporters, soldiers, Cossacks, officers? Did they believe it? That was the riddle, that was the blank spot. After Karakozov's execution his relatives had asked for their name to be changed. Yes, it was a good thing that he had finally and publicly left Olga. A few days ago he had met his son in the street, accompanied by Tasya. They had been coming out of a shop with their purchases. His son had not noticed him and Tasya had looked him straight in the eye but given him no greeting, not even a nod. So much the better. And yet there was no knowing what would happen. Suppose it all came to nothing; they would suffer torment just the same, perhaps even be done to death.... As soon as the chariot halted, the executioner hurried up to Solovyov. He was wearing a red shirt with a black jerkin over it and a long gold watch chain. He quickly unstrapped the condemned man and helped him to step down from the chariot. Accompanied by the executioner, Solovyov *strode with firm footsteps to the scaffold* and with what appeared to be similar self-control mounted a few more steps and took his place at the pillory with his hands tied behind his back. The executioner stationed himself on his right, with two assistants on the platform below in case of necessity. The command "on guard" was given and the executioner removed Solovyov's cap. The officers and all civil servants in uniform lifted their hands in salute. As soon as the sentence had been read out a priest in funeral robes approached the scaffold holding a crucifix. The servant of the church was in a

state of great emotion and could scarcely keep his feet, but Solovyov declared with a shake of the head that he did not wish to accept the blessing and said, not very loudly, *"I don't want it, I don't want it."* Well, that was quite understandable.... When the priest, realising that his last Christian service had been rejected, stepped away and with a slight nod of the head set the seal, as it were, upon the prayer that he had conceived, Solovyov bowed quite low to him. The final moment came. The band of drummers attached to every battalion struck up a rapid drum-roll. At precisely ten o'clock in the morning Solovyov, who had descended a few steps from the pillory, was dressed by the executioner in a long white robe, his head was covered with a hood and the long sleeves were wrapped round the body and tied in front....

The shore was still bathed in a warm freshness that drifted in from the huge sunlit blue sea, the sea-gulls were crying; nothing had changed, except that the Greek steamer had moved away far to the right and now presented a much diminished view of its stern.

A few minutes later Mikhailov came back with something wrapped neatly in white paper, which turned out to be pastries. He undid the packet, chose a pretzel-shaped almond cake for himself and offered the other to Andrei.

"S'il vous plâit, monsieur. You have some splendid pastry shops here, I must say. I got these at Grossberg's in Deribassovskaya Street." He munched for a while with apparent relish. "And I also managed to get tickets at the booking office in town. We leave on Monday."

The town was quite a small one, very clean and old; after the hurly-burly of Odessa it seemed blissful and provincial. Goats roamed its streets. Old ladies sat in the gardens in wicker chairs drinking tea, just like at the villas in Maly Fontan. There were some respectable mansions with balconies and an occasional luxurious carriage was to be seen in the gardens behind the iron railings, but it all looked rather wretched and poor compared with the Odessa mansions and carriages. Two early arrivals, Barannikov and his wife Maria Nikolayevna Olovennikova, had taken a room in Golikov's Inn, otherwise there would have been nothing going at any price; the watering season was in full swing and visitors were pouring in.

Humorous complaints were heard from all and sundry. "What a crowd! And the cost of everything! Has all Russia come here for a cure?" And yet the shops were almost empty and only in the spa gardens and the gas-lit main street was there anywhere for the students and their young ladies and the old gout-crippled ones to walk; all the other streets were dark and quiet as the grave. Beyond the gardens there was a lake with a long log dam across it and very clear water. For some reason there were no fish in the lake. They asked an old boat-keeper about this and he explained that the dam had been built by an "anti-Christ", and this had led to the disappearance of the fish. How did he know it had been built by an anti-Christ? Because no one else would have been able to build such a long dam. When they had left the old fellow who had bestowed upon them this piece of historical information, Mikhailov asked, "Did you realise who the anti-Christ was?"

"No," Andrei confessed. "Or was it Tsar Peter?"

"Of course, it was. Peter built the first factory here and discovered the mineral waters. That's the grateful memory of the people for you!"

They laughed, then Mikhailov said—suddenly, as usual, breaking from laughter into seriousness:

"I'm like the lousy fellow who's longing for a bath. I can't stop talking about it. They won't understand us; we'll have to act ourselves and take the consequences. They'll call you and me anti-Christs too. Won't they? Oh yes, they're sure to. But in about a hundred, two hundred or perhaps even three hundred years.... But here's something else that no one really understands and won't understand for a long while yet, but I'll tell you." He began to speak more quietly and with a slight stammer. He always stammered when he grew excited. "You see, we have become anti-Christs through Christ. That's for sure. Take me, for instance, I was influenced just as much by the Gospel as by any tales of Gracchus or William Tell. And what about 'the end justifies the means'? Did the Jesuits invent it? Or Machiavelli? Certainly not. It's in Christ's own teaching, right down inside, underneath all the beauty. And if it were otherwise, if it were all goodwill and good intentions, could it have conquered as it has done for two thousand years? No, we, anti-Christs, must stand firm on that: the end really does justify the means." And having spoken seriously, he again broke into laughter and his face assumed a light, humorous

expression. "All the same, they'll say, it was you who built such a long dam and it's your fault the fish have died."

Andrei noticed that as the day of the congress approached, the Janitor's nervousness—although he tried to hide it—steadily increased. He was to make a report on the draft Rules that he and Tikhomirov had drawn up. He showed Andrei the draft. It was all quite logical and clear-cut: centralisation, strict discipline, and, of course, with the whole emphasis on political struggle. In a word, the aim was to set up an organisation. Not a group, not a circle, but an organisation, a party. The Janitor was afraid of the voices that might recall Nechayev, if not in Lipetsk, where the gathering would be mostly of the like-minded, then surely in Voronezh. And so every day in Odessa, during the journey, and here, in Lipetsk, when they took lodgings together, he and Andrei talked, discussed interpretations and argued. Most of the arguments were over small points, a word, the tone of what was said. The Janitor was impatient and rather crude. Sometimes this jarred on Andrei and sometimes he preferred not to listen, because on all the main points they were in agreement.

At last, in mid-June, the people they had been waiting for arrived.

Andrei knew nearly all of them, some from his time in Odessa, such as Grishka Goldenberg, Kolodkevich and Frolenko, and others, like Tikhomirov and Morozov, superficially at least, from the days of the Big Trial. As for the Janitor, he felt he had known him for a hundred years. Barannikov, whose alias was "Semyon", had been a bosom friend of the Janitor's since their schooldays. They were both from the same town, Putivl, and Andrei chummed up at once with this tall, black-haired giant. Only on the first day did his wife, Maria Nikolayevna, seem haughty and rather dry, too much of the *lady*—she was older than Semyon and this made itself felt both in her looks and in her manner of speaking to him too firmly; but Andrei soon realised that this first impression was deceptive, that Maria Nikolayevna was educated and intelligent, to an almost unwomanly degree, and it was not the *lady* in her but the mannishness that was noticeable. All of them had certain minor unattractive features that showed up at once. Maria Nikolayevna had this haughty, seemingly aristocratic dryness, the Janitor's manner was too rigid, without any half-tones or sentimentality, Tikhomirov had a malicious way of

talking, Grishka Goldenberg's loud voice and fussiness and the obviously high opinion he had of himself were irritating. Semyon, on the other hand, was far too reticent and could sit as silent as a statue all evening long, which was not too pleasant either. But it was quite clear that these were trifles, superficial things, and that underneath there were real people, big people, perhaps even far above the ordinary. Andrei had not known Kvyatkovsky, whose conspiratorial name was "Alexander the First". The Janitor had talked a lot about him. Nor had he known the young Stepan Shirayev. These two had quite recently built up in St. Petersburg another secret group, a group within a group, called "Freedom or Death". All this had to be put into some sort of order. Yes, they were exceptional people! He had felt that suddenly, on the morning of the 17th, when he stood watching them from the hotel steps, about ten of them gathered in the middle of the courtyard, joking with the hotel servants. They were waiting for coachmen. Everyone was impatient. The Janitor had made arrangements with the coachmen the day before. He had even driven out of town with one to choose a place for the picnic and found an excellent little wood. The boots had told him about it. It was a spot where the merchants always held their revels, and also the young gentlemen with their ladies.

"Have you only one lady between you?"

"We'll have plenty soon. They'll be coming along later! Enough to go round!"

The boots winked and grinned and offered advice. They ought to take some good rugs to sit on; the ground was still damp, it hadn't warmed through yet. They came running out with the goods that had been ordered in packets and bags and piled them on the bench—snacks, wine, cigarettes and, of course, vodka. Andrei stood on the porch, looking at his friends and listening to the joking conversation. Nobody had any idea of who they really were. In all Russia such people could be counted on the fingers of one hand. There were only about fifteen altogether. He viewed them now as if from the side. Young, handsome, stylishly dressed, real debonair Petersburg gentlemen! And yet each of them was a celebrity in his own way. They all had some resounding exploit to their credit, something that had made its impact throughout the country and even abroad. "Semyon" Barannikov and Sergei Kravchinsky—the latter was far away now, either in England

or Switzerland—had executed Mezentsev, Chief of the Third Section and the Gendarmerie, last year. Mikhailo was renowned for many exploits; he had freed "Alyosha Popovich", served as a gaoler and set the Chigirin people at liberty. Goldenberg had shot Prince Kropotkin. Kolya Morozov, that frail pink-faced lad—there he was fooling about, declaiming some usual bit of nonsense, a great versifier, everyone was holding their sides with laughter and even the boots were gaping—he was one of the most daring and resolute terrorists. His article must have scared the government no less than any assassination attempt. Tikhomirov, the same age as Andrei but much older in appearance, rather sombre, pale, looking on sardonically at the young men's tomfoolery, had four years of prison behind him, an experience that none of the others had yet known. Everyone said he was brilliant and, if he wanted to devote himself to the legal press, could have become a Shchedrin, a Mikhailovsky or a Shelgunov. The Janitor said that he was far more penetrating than Mikhailovsky or Shelgunov. "There's no fat or flabbiness in him; he's all muscle." And there was the handsome Maria Nikolayevna, sitting on the bench smoking, with a faint rather condescending smile on her face, like a lady slightly bored with the romping children around her. Who would have said that this white-faced matron had but lately taken part in a fearless attempt to snatch Voinaralsky out of the hands of the gendarmes. The Janitor had told Andrei about it. He had been astounded at her composure. At the crucial moment, when she was waiting for her comrades at the secret address after the attack—no one knew whether it had been successful or not—she had given way to a slight fatigue and dozed off. Amazing nerves! They said that Maria Nikolayevna was closely connected with the circle led by the famous Zaichnevsky, the Jacobin, and still stood for conspiracy and a *coup d'état*....

The fact that the people here were different—Jacobins, rebels, populists, propagandists—was nothing to worry about. It might even be an advantage, in the sense that it would prove visibly that they all realised there was no other way, they had all turned, or rather been turned, on to the same road.

Three coaches drove into the yard. The party got aboard, noisily taking their seats.

Morozov, who for some reason was the merriest of all, suddenly began singing in Italian. The hotel servants waved

them good-bye. The day was already ablaze with sunshine. At a sign from the Janitor, Andrei got into the first coach with him, Kvyatkovsky and Shirayev. The sunshine, the rushing to and fro, the fresh heat of June that wafted into the coach, the smell of grass and summer and the underlying sense of excitement made him slightly dizzy. And as he sat in the coach with his shoulder nudging the Janitor's sturdy shoulder and looked at the young, bearded laughing faces of Stepan and Alexander—he had never met them till yesterday and now they were the closest of friends—he experienced a strange and wonderful feeling: the moment of the fullness of life, of rejoicing in life was at hand! They began to argue with the Janitor about something, they laughed, they wrestled, vaunting their strength like little boys. The coaches were moving across low-lying ground that had evidently been flooded in spring, and even now there was still a trickle of water in the runnels between dry patches of sand.

They crossed a bridge, climbed the low bank in front of them and, swinging to the right, into the sun, took the main track across the fields. The forest showed blue on the horizon. They reached it and drove for at least half an hour through woodland until the Janitor shouted to the driver to stop. Among the trees there were a few wooden sheds and something that looked like a summer restaurant with its windows still boarded up. Andrei jumped to the ground and, when the second coach drove up, suddenly ran across to it, seized the back axle and lifted the vehicle together with its passengers.

"Halt! Out you get!"

The horse that had been going at a slow trot came to a stop.

Everyone was astounded and the coachman gasped, "That's a strong gentleman for you!" Andrei laughed complacently. It was an old trick he had often practised in Odessa, in his student days. True, in those days he had had more muscle, but even so he hadn't lost the knack; he had only split the skin on his hands a little. Maria Nikolayevna gave him her handkerchief to stop the blood. The Janitor, already busy with practical matters, rewarding the coachmen with snacks and vodka, so they should not grow tired of waiting the three or four hours that would be needed, scarcely noticed Andrei's feat. He set off quickly along a path leading into the heart of the forest and the others followed in single file. Soon a large clearing came

into view with a clump of birch-trees and bushes in the middle. It was an excellent spot with cover in the bushes from which one could observe all approaches.

They spread rugs and coats on the ground and set out the bottles, glasses and food on newspapers, then everyone sat down and smoked. What a day it was!

Kvyatkovsky and Mikhailov read in turn, one the draft programme and the other, the Rules of the new society. Since Andrei knew both texts and had discussed them many times with the Janitor, he did not listen very attentively. His thoughts took wing again and it was as if he were on the sunlit fringe of the wood and looking on from there.

He saw a group of people, a mere handful, sitting in the shade of the birch-trees.

What did they want to do, what could they do, in this inconceivably vast world that they had challenged? It seemed absurd, fantastic—but only for a moment. Kvyatkovsky's voice sounded through the buzzing of the bees with unrelenting firmness.

"...Therefore any progressive person working for the good of society must first of all put an end to the existing system of government in this country, but there is no way of fighting it other than by taking up arms. Therefore we shall fight by the William Tell method until...." From the way Morozov beamed and, as if to confirm every word, nodded his splendid mane of hair, one could guess that he had taken a direct part in composing the document, "...until we achieve a degree of freedom that will allow us to discuss unrestrictedly all political and social questions in the press and at social gatherings and decide them by means of free representatives of the people...."

Another two paragraphs enlarging on this thought—and that was the whole programme. No, it was too short. More than this needed to be said, there should be some further explanation of the ideals and future of Russia for the sake of which all this was being done. But from his talks with Mikhailov and Tikhomirov Andrei had realised that the brevity, the apparent incompleteness of the programme was intentional—so that the discussion should not develop into endless debate. More phrases would only mean more interpretations. This was a practical matter, the confirmation of one idea—that was what they had come here for. The "William Tell method"!

It sounded rather splendid and romantic, but it boiled down to that one thing: terror. There were no objections; everyone was eager to go on to the more interesting part—the rules. Andrei did not want to criticise, to begin a discussion about higher things right from the start. After all, he was only a beginner, a new recruit. But he could have told them that for any party its programme is more important than its rules.

But he refrained. That could wait. The time would come for discussion, but now they had to organise for breaking. The making would come later.

A decision was passed to publish the programme in the first number of the newspaper or magazine that would be brought out by the new executive committee. Then Mikhailov read out the draft rules, first the whole text and then paragraph by paragraph, each of which was discussed. And this was where the trouble started. Everyone wanted to have his say. They interrupted one another and in their excitement shouted far too loudly and Mikhailov cut them short abruptly. It was the usual situation—dead silence on questions of theory, of programme; as if no one had any ideas at all and everything was clear, but when it came to matters of morality, of everyday life, of practice there was an immediate flare of interest and clash of opinions. Grishka Goldenberg kept jumping to his feet and bursting into a flow of expostulation that no one could follow. Bubbles appeared on his lips, his eyes bulged. Mikhailov interrupted, waving his arms.

"That's enough! Quiet! I need a secretary, my voice is giving out. I propose Boris, he's a reasonable man. In addition to which he can stop a coach and horses when he feels like it. So if the need arises he should be able to stop some of our speakers...."

"Boris" was their name for Andrei. His appointment was approved and Mikhailov started reading again, from the first paragraph.

"Right then, paragraph one: Only he may join the Executive Committee who agrees to place at its disposal his whole life and his entire property irrevocably, so there can be no question of any conditions for leaving it. Are there any objections against this paragraph?"

"No! None!" they all answered at once.

But the other paragraphs gave rise to argument.

"Paragraph two: Every new member of the Executive Com-

mittee has to be recommended by three existing members. In the event of his candidature being objected to there must be not less than three positive votes to one negative.

"Paragraph three: Every person entering the Executive Committee shall have these Rules read out to him paragraph by paragraph. In the event of his disagreeing with any paragraph, the reading must be stopped and the candidate allowed to leave only after he has promised never to divulge any knowledge acquired during the reading to the end of his life. Moreover he shall be told that anyone who breaks this promise shall be treated as a traitor." (At this point Grishka demanded that it should be stated exactly what such treatment would be. Andrei said that it was obvious to everyone how traitors were dealt with; they were killed, and as for inventing any special ways of killing them, like the Nechayev method—a spy must be strangled and then shot through the head—this was unnecessary; it smacked of the theatre and also of a cruel fanaticism. All agreed and the paragraph was allowed to stand.)

"Paragraph four: A member of the Executive Committee may be given leave of absence, for a given term or indefinitely by a majority decision but with the obligation to keep everything he knows a complete secret. In the opposite case he must be considered a traitor." (Maria Nikolayevna considered this point too trivial to be included in the rules. The Janitor and Tigrych argued against her, particularly Tigrych, from which Andrei deduced that he might have been the author of this point. Indeed, what leave of absence could one take from revolutionary work? And for an indefinite term at that? Grishka again asked for the floor and, frothing again, shouted, "That should be crossed out. It's nonsense. We are doomed, we have no life except the revolution, nor can we have! What rubbish! Leave of absence, holidays?" Andrei said that probably a general and more detailed paragraph on discipline should be introduced, in which the question of leave could be included as a minor point. In exceptional cases. Revolutionaries were ordinary mortals like everyone else, they might fall ill themselves, so might their relatives; all kinds of things might happen and leave of absence might be a sudden and vital necessity. But no "indefinite periods"! And it was wrong to place this point, which was exceptional and minor in relation to all the others, among the first paragraphs of the Rules. How could we be thinking of leave when we had only just started?)

"Paragraph five: Every member of the Executive Committee, against whom the government has irrefutable evidence, is duty bound in the event of his arrest to refuse to give any testimony or to declare himself a member of the Committee on any account. The Committee must be invisible and out of reach. If there is no irrefutable evidence, the arrested person may and indeed must deny any connection with the Committee and try to extricate himself from the charges in order to go on serving the society." (This was allowed to stand unamended, there was no argument, and only Andrei remarked that the rule was probably not feasible. It was impossible to refuse to testify and at the same time wriggle out of the charges. Irrefutable evidence? Anyone who had been under investigation knew that between irrefutable and refutable evidence there were many borderline cases that one would not know how to classify.)

"Paragraph six: A Member of the Committee has the right, with the knowledge of the organisation, to join other secret societies for the purpose of guiding them as far as possible in the spirit of the Committee or bringing them into a vassal relationship with it. Moreover he has the right to keep their affairs secret on condition that they do not prejudice the aims of the Committee; otherwise he must immediately leave such a society."

There were several more paragraphs—on the election of an editorial board, on the administrative commission consisting of three members and two probationary members in the event of arrest, on the secretary who was to have the safekeeping of all documents and funds, and on the Committee's agents, first- and second-grade. More arguments arose, surprise was expressed, Morozov wondered why first-grade agents should be less trusted than second-grade, to which Tikhomirov replied, "So that nobody will know how many grades one has to go through before reaching the Committee."

"But this means having a hierarchical structure! Just what we are against!" Morozov exclaimed. "In theory we reject it, but in practice...."

"We have no other alternative."

"Yes, we have, and it lies in our restricted numbers, in our spirit of comradeship, in equality, in the selection of people according to their moral qualities...."

"Oh, heavens!" Tikhomirov frowned, and turned pale.

"Keep those phrases for your poetry. It's one of two things: either we set up a circle for soul-saving conversation or we create a militant organisation for struggle, for terror, which happens to be just what you're trying harder than any of us for, damn it! Well? How are we going to get anywhere without strict secrecy, without the hierarchy you're so afraid of?"

"Hierarchy will lead to hypertrophy," Morozov persisted. "The lower ranks will gemmate, and the higher ones become puffed up with the sense of their own authority...."

It was an old argument. Both men grew heated and raised their voices until they were almost shouting in anger. Others joined in. Mikhailov supported Tikhomirov, so did Kvyatkovsky; but Frolenko said that among the Kiev rebels there had been an attempt to form such a hierarchical system. A centre had been elected with dictatorial powers, it could have its own secrets and act at its own discretion. What had been the result? All the secrets were soon revealed, even those concerning election to the centre. And no one would obey his superiors as he was supposed to according to the Rules. They obeyed only out of an inward respect, personal prestige, as they had obeyed Valerian, for instance.

Grishka said, "No, this is not the thing for us! We, Russians, don't know how to keep secrets. And we don't like subordination." So because of this trivial question of first- and second-grade agents a long argument ensued.

Andrei said, "Hierarchical structure isn't the main thing; the point is that we are starting military operations. That means we've got to have a commander, orders have to be given. You can't carry on correct military operations without that. Our commander will be the centre. Well, let's suppose it's some kind of managing commission that we elect. If we're going to fight the state with its army of half a million troops, we've got to set about the job in earnest. We have no other strength except discipline and our willingness to die. In the past few months everything in this country has changed radically for the worse. These governor-generalships, the declaration of martial law, the mass arrests, the banishments—all this has shocked society, frightened the liberals out of their wits. To bring the country out of its torpor there has got to be a powerful blow. Then the forces of resistance will reawaken among the people and society in general. And perhaps not just one blow, but a series, precisely calculated. We can't rely on spontaneous

actions; there must be a system. And that means we've got to have a centre...."

He saw that he was being listened to. They were looking at him with new eyes, almost with astonishment.

In the hotel that evening Frolenko said, "Something's come over you, old man. You're a different person."

"Better or worse?"

"As far as I'm concerned—better."

And Kolodkevich, the "Purring Cat", remarked, "A whole day passed and our Andrei never mentioned the word 'constitution'!"

Andrei shook his fist at the black-bearded Kolodkevich. "All right, you joker, you're a zealous constitutionalist yourself. In December, you went off to Kiev to a secret meeting of revolutionaries and Zemstvo people. Valerian was there and I was invited but couldn't go."

The next day they elected the members of the editorial board—Tikhomirov and Morozov, and the managing commission—Mikhailov, Frolenko and Tikhomirov. Tikhomirov's candidature had a rather rough passage. Morozov expressed doubts on the ground that Tigrych would have too much to do. They had been sparring with each other all the time. It looked as if the Sparrow was hoping that Tikhomirov would withdraw from the managing commission, but he only bowed his rather bald head and sat in sullen silence, and was elected. That evening Andrei visited Frolenko, who was staying at the Hotel "Moscow", and saw Goldenberg, noticeably drunk, raving almost hysterically at the cool-headed Mikhailo.

"You tell me this, where's the justice in it? They set up a terrorist organisation and they don't elect the main terrorist to a single one of the commissions! Did any of them kill Prince Kropotkin? I respect you, Mikhailo, but you haven't killed anyone, if you'll forgive my saying so. And Andrei? Andrei's just a well-known propagandist. I don't really know what you're supposed to be doing here, Andrei? I'm surprised they didn't elect you to the managing commission, if they've accepted Tikhomirov; he's a clever man but a notorious coward. Everyone knows how scared he is of spies; he's the laughing-stock of Petersburg for that. And Semyon? Semyon helped Kravchinsky; he was present at the execution of Mezentsev, but it was Kravchinsky who did the job. There's not a single proper terrorist among you. And yet I, Grishka

Goldenberg, I...." He began to laugh, clasping his head in his hands. "They won't elect me to anything! It's absurd! When the job I did was written about in newspapers all over the world! No, I have no intention of making a fuss, getting offended, it just makes me laugh! Yes, laugh, laugh, laugh! I'm staying on good terms with you all, my dear friends; I shall still be your loyal Grishka and do everything I'm told, but it makes me laugh. Ha-ha-ha!"

And he walked out laughing. To a place where he could go on getting thoroughly drunk.

"Isn't he noisy!" said Andrei.

"I warned Janitor about Grishka," Mikhailo said. "Back in April, when we were discussing whom to invite to Lipetsk. You see, we southerners know Grishka better, but for the northerners he's a famous figure, a hero. Janitor said, 'I wouldn't trust him with a position of authority, but I would with a pistol. He's a daring fellow, even if he is a bit crazy.' "

On his way back to the inn Andrei met Tikhomirov strolling by himself in a dark street. Tikhomirov was concerned for his health and liked to take a walk before going to bed. He said that in the four years he had spent in prison his greatest longing had been for fresh air and the chance of going for a walk. He took Andrei by the arm and spoke in a quiet voice.

"There's a man around here I don't like the look of. Let's get moving."

"Who?"

"Just around here.... He may be sitting at a window...." He lowered his voice to a whisper and almost dragged Andrei along. "We can't see in the dark, but he's sitting there listening, the louse. Today he came up pestering me, 'Where are you from? How long are you staying? Have you been taking treatment from Doctor Petrov?' I sent him packing with a curt 'No, I haven't!' And such a revolting face, smiles all the time...."

It was a warm night. A nightingale was singing.

From far away, by some devious route, a thought suddenly came to him. Why had that girl, the general's daughter, who was regarded as his fiancée, not come to Lipetsk? Sonya Perovskaya. And he remembered that poignant feeling that had overcome him in the corridor of the Remand Prison after seeing them together—a feeling of envy. Something must have

happened between them. Perhaps for the reason that Grishka had spoken of. No, it was not cowardice; there could be no cowards here, a coward wouldn't come within a hundred miles of this place.

"What made you suspect the presence of a spy?"

"He was pumping me. I think tomorrow's meeting may be one too many. We ought to break up and go."

Andrei asked, "Where is your fiancée Sonya?"

Tikhomirov looked at Andrei. Even in the darkness Andrei noticed the way he lifted his pale face guardedly.

"Your information is out of date. She stopped being my fiancée long ago." And after a pause he added, "Let's move on. I don't like it here; it's a warm night, all the windows are open and someone may hear...."

No, Grishka was wrong; this was not cowardice, it was a morbid overcautiousness. He had somehow grown old much too quickly. Though he was only Andrei's age, he looked ten years older. Caution was like gout or deafness—a sign of senility. They walked to the end of the street, across the square and into the gardens. On the benches in the darkness there was a stir of life, probably the courting couples. Now a glimpse of a white dress, now a whisper. Tikhomirov led Andrei further and further into the park, where there were no benches and there would not be a living soul. Such nights with their moonless warmth, the stifling breath of flowers and young leaves, happened only once or twice a year.

At length Tikhomirov began to explain what had happened between them. Evidently it had been on his mind for some time. When a woman is too passionately involved in a cause she loses something of her own nature. And this was what seemed to have happened to Sonya. The crack had appeared almost as soon as he was released after the Big Trial. Tikhomirov had intended to go south to see his people—after all, Andrei himself had gone off to Odessa, to his family right away too!—but Sonya had insisted that they should at once set about helping Myshkin to escape; there was a rumour that he was to be transferred to the Kharkov central prison.

"You see, I just couldn't refuse; but I hesitated. And she felt it at once and cooled towards me. She judged me by herself, and she was aching to get into action. As for any human understanding of the fact that she and I were in different states—that was beyond her. I had been in prison for four

years, I was tired and worn out and dreamed of seeing my home and family again; but she had been at liberty, on bail, as the daughter of the esteemed General Lev Nikolayevich Perovsky. No—it just wasn't in her to understand that difference!" Tikhomirov was speaking emotionally. He still hadn't got over his resentment. " 'Do you expect me to persuade you?' she said. And with such a severe, revolutionary expression on her face, and contemptuous at the same time—like a *countess.* Of course. I hastily assured her that there was not the slightest hesitation on my part. And went off to Kharkov with her. You know what happened there. We hadn't enough funds or contacts; when I rushed off to Petersburg for funds Myshkin was moved to the south. In other words it was sheer nonsense from beginning to end. But you should have heard the way she pitched into me! She darted about the room like a rabid lynx. 'We've missed the chance! Idiots! We might just as well not have come!' There was a lot of shouting and insults and it was hard to make it up afterwards.... Why she isn't here—I don't know. She's still in Kharkov. Mikhailo didn't pick her up on his way here for some reason, he thinks she's a far too zealous populist and 'Russianite'. It was a mistake, of course—and he'll pay for it."

Tikhomirov laughed with a quiet complacency, not openly, just to himself. In fact, the whole story was really meant just "for himself". Andrei was at a distance, he knew neither of them very well, and this was probably the only reason why the story had been told in such detail. However, Andrei was used to people baring their hearts to him. Among these people the chief and perhaps the only standard was fearlessness, readiness to sacrifice oneself. It was valued higher than intelligence, education and many other qualities. And for some reason it made him happy, and as they walked back in the darkness through the deserted park he actually began to whistle. Tikhomirov again started talking about there being no need for tomorrow's meeting; all the questions had been decided and the main thing had been achieved—unity on the subject of political struggle. There was no need to tempt fate. Every new gathering was an additional risk. Why go to such lengths when the whole place was swarming with spies? Andrei could not restrain himself—this foolish gaiety had taken such a hold!—and burst out laughing.

"It's hardly swarming, Tigrych—don't exaggerate."

"Yes, it is. I can feel the suspicion mounting all round us. For instance, I don't like the waiter at the inn; that one with the black hair and warts."

"But we can't break up until the summing up has been made."

"What do you have in mind? Oh, I see. But everything's clear without any summing up. The Janitor likes creating an effect."

"All the same, words are needed," Andrei said, "because—well, just think of what we are trying to do! It's not just a matter of stabbing a spy or giving some merchant a shake-up. The effect of this will be felt in a hundred years from now. Janitor is absolutely right. Everything has got to be said and made quite clear. It has got to be like this. There's no hope otherwise, as things are at the moment. And we must all agree on that point."

Tikhomirov was silent for a time, then said, "Well, it's up to you..." and made a limp gesture of dismissal.

In the forest the next day the Janitor delivered the speech of indictment against Alexander II. This was the final and essential summing up and its purpose was to explain why the task that Solovyov had failed to perform was a matter of singular importance and urgency. He recounted briefly the whole reign of this deceitful despot, who for nearly a quarter of a century had been fooling the Russian people with empty promises and baits. Yes, the reforms had been a good thing and could have initiated a great regeneration of Russia as a free and flourishing country with the just rule by assembly that had deep roots in Russian tradition. But why hadn't they? Why fifteen years after the introduction of these reforms had life become not better but worse, even more unbearable, even darker, more sickening? Because all these concessions to the people and to society had been a deception, mere hypocrisy. In practice they had meant free play for the sharks, for plundering of the land, millions of beggars and starving. For the sake of appearance he had pardoned the Decembrists and brought back the few survivors, now wretched old men, from Siberia; but he had mercilessly and senselessly crushed the Poles, drowned Poland in blood and sent thousands upon thousands to that same Siberia. For appearance sake, to fool the world, he had proclaimed ringing phrases about freedom and a constitution that had been the avowed pretext for the campaign to liberate

our Slav brothers from the Turks, but in practice he had crushed every vestige of freedom, every thought of a constitution in his own country. Never before had there been so many scaffolds in Russia as under the "Tsar-Liberator". Executions in Kiev and Petersburg, brutal treatment of the prisoners in the Peter and Paul Fortress, which had led to revolt and beatings, to the vicious mockery of women, our good friends, Malinovskaya, Vitanyeva and Alexandrova—all this had been done with the tsar's blessing. What could be said of this peace-lover's deliberate imposition of additional punishment on the propagandists in the Big Trial! And who would answer for those who had died, who had gone out of their minds while awaiting trial? All the good that had been done at the beginning of his reign the Emperor had destroyed in recent years. Could he be forgiven for his oppression of the people, for the execution and humiliation of their finest sons? Could it be forgiven that all the hopes of Russia's ever becoming a free country had been shattered and desecrated?

The answer was unanimous: no, it could not be forgiven. Ten of them sat in a circle, some on the grass, some on tree-stumps—Maria Nikolayevna, Barannikov, Tikhomirov; Morozov, Shirayev, Goldenberg, Kvyatkovsky, Frolenko, Kolodkevich and Andrei. One man stood in the middle with his hands behind his back, pale-faced, his forceful brilliant gaze focussed on one point, and spoke. Andrei had never heard such an impassioned, inspiring speech. As soon as he had finished Andrei himself rose.

"If in any sense we consider the defence of individual rights our aim," he said with his heart pounding, once again aware of that immense feeling of rejoicing in life that he had come to know in the past few days, "and believe that despotism is evil.... If we believe that only by struggle can the people win freedom then we have no right to be indifferent to such manifestations of tyranny as the atrocities of the Odessa and Kiev governors, Totleben and Chertkov. But the initiative for this policy of persecution and reprisal comes from the tsar. The party must do all it can; if it has the power to overthrow the despot by means of an uprising it should do that. If it has only the strength to punish him personally, then it should do that. If it does not possess the strength even for that it should at least raise a loud protest. But there is strength enough, and our strength will grow the sooner, the more decisively we act!"

He arrived in Voronezh with quite a new feeling. It was a joyful feeling and he concealed it from the others, while allowing himself occasionally, for a few brief moments, to delight in it secretly. This was the end of his provincial vegetation. Now, in this tremendous enterprise, he would show what he could do. Already he had been noticed and recognised. People came to him for advice, listened to what he had to say, and he often heard their comments: "Boris said.... Boris thinks...." The Janitor—that leader, that titan—had instantly become his closest friend; they were inseparable and discussed everything together. Sometimes they argued but for some reason the Janitor always agreed in the end.

"I'm fed up with your peasant pig-headedness!" the Janitor would say jokingly.

"And I am surprised at your practicality—it's not a bit aristocratic. You're making it all up; you're no aristocrat, my friend, your forbears were merchants of the first guild!"

In Voronezh, as in Lipetsk, they had taken a room together. The participants in the previous gathering were all here, except Grishka Goldenberg. There had been doubts about whether to invite him or not. The Janitor was by no means ill-disposed towards Grishka and thought he could probably be used, but Andrei had said that he could be used without being invited to the congress. "There's so much noise when he's about. And where there's noise there's danger. And another thing. We are in for a struggle here, a clash of opinions, and we shall gain nothing from having our case defended by this bombastic, irresponsible fellow."

After thinking for a moment the Janitor agreed. He was all the more ready to agree because the Voronezh congress was to be attended by Rodionych and Plekhanov, both of whom had some none too pleasant memories of Grishka—in connection with the March meetings in Petersburg, when the question of helping Solovyov was being decided.

"All right, we won't invite him to Voronezh then," the Janitor said. "There's going to be a split anyway, we shall all go our various ways and Grishka will follow us."

Everyone was afraid of this and sure that a split was unavoidable. But somehow it was avoided! Neither the "villagers" nor the terrorists could bring themselves to part at once. All together there were so few of them in Russia, far too few to scatter. They clung to each other, seeking warmth, strength

and help. Out of the twenty or so who gathered in Voronezh ten were the conspirators from Lipetsk, who made up the Executive Committee; the other ten were Land and Freedom people, "villagers", some from Petersburg, some from Kharkov—Perovskaya and Lebedeva—and some from country districts who had taken brief leave of their masters or the local offices where they worked. Originally they had intended to meet in Tambov and many of them had gone there. But a bizarre incident had prevented the meeting from taking place. During a boating trip on the River Tsna, Zhenya Figner, Vera's sister, who had an excellent voice, had sung operatic arias so splendidly that quite a large audience had gathered on the bank, clapping and cheering, all of which had attracted unnecessary attention. What kind of group was this? Who were they? So they had decided it would be wiser to leave Tambov and disappear.

In Voronezh, they chose secluded spots for their meetings—the Botanical Gardens, the Bishop's Grove, or else they would take out boats and go up the river to the islands. On the very first day the Janitor said that there was a possibility of replenishing the society with new members, people of notable revolutionary experience. Those he had in mind were Olovennikov, Zhelyabov and Kolodkevich, all of them well known to the assembled company. They were over there, hiding in the nearby grove of trees, too tactful and excited to appear. They were accepted unanimously and voices shouted for them to come over. At this juncture the "villagers" stated that they, too—what a coincidence!—had in mind three excellent candidates for the society who, suffering no less from excitement, were concealed in the wood on the other side.

That was how it began—in such an easy, half-joking manner. But a grim and grievous note was soon sounded. Mikhailov informed them that, according to the latest messages from Odessa, the executioner's hand was poised over Dmitry Lizogub. Valerian, Brandtner and Antonov had been executed. And here was Valerian's dying behest to his comrades. It had been written at dawn on May 14th, the day of his execution, and they had only recently received it. The Janitor read out the text as printed in the latest number of the *Land and Freedom Newssheet.*

"Dear friends and comrades! I am writing to you for the last time in my life and I therefore wish you to know the deep

affection in which I hold you all, and that you should think kindly of me when I am gone. Personally I shall take with me to the grave only the dearest memories of you.... I wish you, my dear friends, to die more productively than we. This is the only and the best wish that we can give you. And another thing: do not shed your precious blood in vain! For they keep on taking it...."

Andrei listened with choking misery. He could see Valerian's pleasant, bespectacled face, hear his rapid, merry, half-Ukrainian speech, and his misery was increased by the fact that he had been so bitterly mistaken and had so foolishly shunned Valerian's company, regarding him in his stupid peasant arrogance as an aristocrat. But what kind of aristocrat had he been? A plain and simple man, like all heroes. No one else could have said so simply, "Die more productively than we." And in Andrei's pocket was the last act of kindness Valerian had done for him—a passport made out in the name of Vasily Andreyevich Chernyavsky. The Janitor went on reading:

"We have no doubt that your work will now be aimed in one direction. Even if you had not written about this we could have deduced it ourselves. There is nothing else, we believe, that the party can physically undertake. But for you to pursue a policy of terror effectively you must have people and funds. May God send you every success, brothers. This is our only wish before we die. And that you will die and, perhaps, very soon, and die in no less obscurity than we—we are not in the slightest doubt. Our cause can never perish and it is this certainty that makes us so contemptuous of death. Therefore may you live, and, if die you must, then die more productively than we. Farewell! Farewell!"

There were some other valedictory phrases. Andrei was not listening. He had read this letter the day before in the latest issue of the *Land and Freedom Newssheet,* No 6, that had just arrived from Petersburg. He could see from the faces of the others that they were all suffering as he was.... Yes, the Janitor was a genius! What a great idea it had been to write to Valerian in prison, to console him before death with the news that the party's work would "now be aimed in one direction!" and having received an answer, this heart-rending letter of testament, to print it at once in the *Newssheet.* The point was that now Valerian's cause would be continued. Even the name itself, the Executive Committee, was Valerian's idea.

Yes, it would be difficult after such a letter had been read out to argue against terrorism and vengeance. The Janitor had thought of everything, wise man that he was. And, indeed, on the first day things went swimmingly. Titych, a sensible, good-natured giant of a fellow from the Tambov settlement, was unanimously elected chairman of the congress. Then they set about drawing up the programme. The old Land and Freedom programme that had been approved a year ago was read out point by point and every amendment was put up for discussion. Basically the programme remained unchanged. As before the party's main work was to be conducted among the people, but more importance was attached to the disorganising (Valerian's expression!) part of the programme, that is, the importance of agrarian terrorism and acts of vengeance against the government's agents in the provinces.

There was a unanimous vote for the following brief resolution: "In view of the fact that the Russian people's revolutionary party has from the day of its inception and throughout its development encountered a bitter enemy in the Russian government, in view of the fact that the government's repressive measures have of late reached their apogee, the congress deems its necessary to intensify the development of the disorganising group in the sense of struggle against the government, while at the same time continuing work among the people, in the sense of settlements and popular disorganising."

But the next question—on political terror—turned out to be highly inflammable. Everyone seemed to be in agreement. Yes, it was necessary, useful and possible, no one questioned that. But by the expressions on the faces of those who nodded and by the tone of their voices, particularly that of Plekhanov, who was in a rather agitated mood, and Popov, Rodionych, who behaved in a surly, abrupt manner, interrupting and in general being far too bossy, Andrei felt that their consent was strained and not genuine. Everything indicated that there was going to be a row. And Andrei himself was eager to take up the challenge. Finally, Plekhanov let go and asked straight out:

"Look here, what are you counting on? What do you hope to gain by all this?"

"We shall gain a constitution!" the Janitor blazed suddenly. "We shall throw the government into confusion and force its hand!"

"A constitution? So that's what you're after! Not much of a goal for revolutionaries."

"A constitution is not the goal. It is only a means in the struggle for socialism," Andrei said. "In a country under arbitrary rule there is no possibility either of working among the people or of defending class interests in any way. There is only one possibility—to get yourself killed for a mere trifle."

"A constitution will give the power to the bourgeoisie. You will be merely a cat's paw for them."

"No, a constitution will give power to the representatives of the whole people—the Constituent Assembly!" Andrei was sometimes able to crush an opponent with his voice alone. He noted that Georges had turned pale.

"Sheer naivety and theoretical ignorance!"

"It's the only road for Russia. A political revolution will serve to liberate not only one class but the whole Russian people. The whole people, you understand? And it's that *whole* that we must work for. I, for example, know plenty of peasants with intelligence, energy and an interest in public affairs. As things are now they won't act over small matters because they don't want to become martyrs just for nothing. A constitution would give them the chance to act over these small matters without becoming martyrs—and they would take it. And eventually, when they have evolved a big social ideal, they will become the kind of unshakeable heroes that you sometimes find among the sectarians. That's the way a people's party is built up!"

"And you are hoping that your road, the road of regicide, of terror, will bring you to this paradise?"

"Now then, gentlemen, don't let's get too involved in the remote future!" Tikhomirov called out, taking over the duties of chairman because Titych had been listening in silence to the argument. "It has been decided already that we shall intensify the disorganising work. There were no objections, were there?"

The Janitor whispered to Andrei, "Don't push things as far as a split!"

"But why the hell should we play hide-and-seek?" Andrei responded, also in a whisper.

"There's no need to go that far. It's not in our interests at the moment...."

Plekhanov stuck to his point.

"On that road you will achieve nothing except a three after the name of Alexander!"

Nevertheless, because no one supported Georges, they succeeded in passing a motion of approval on terrorism—it was recognised as an exceptional measure. Then the Janitor spoke specifically about regicide and informed them that a special League, or Executive Committee, which had firmly decided to carry Solovyov's cause through to the end, had been formed. It was clear to everyone that nothing would be changed by argument, the Committee would act no matter what happened, and after some irritable exchanges the majority decided to give the Committee assistance in money and manpower. The Janitor concealed a smile of satisfaction. But Sparrow, on the other hand, who had been scribbling all the time in a notebook, beamed openly and radiantly as a child. But his radiance quickly faded because as soon as the question of the party organ came up for debate, Plekhanov rose with the *Land and Freedom Newssheet* in his hand and in an agitated voice began to read out Morozov's famous article on political terror. Everyone listened in tense silence although they, of course, knew and remembered the article quite well. They were waiting to see what would happen. Sparrow had the air of an impudently daring schoolboy who had done wrong but was still ready for anything. Plekhanov paused in his reading.

"Well, gentlemen, do you consider that the editors should have the right to go on expressing themselves in this fashion in future?"

He looked round with an air of astonishment at the people gathered round him reclining or sitting on their rugs and mackintoshes.

Frolenko said, "Well, I should say that's just the way to write in a revolutionary organ...."

It was not said with much certainty but in the painful pause that ensued it was clear that Frolenko's somewhat doubtful assumption was generally approved. Popov asked Morozov quite unaggressively—he was making a gesture to Plekhanov, "Do you regard this as a general method?"

Sparrow blurted out hotly, "You see, as soon as freedom of speech is secured and absolutism overthrown, it will be necessary to act by persuasion. Nothing but persuasion!"

One of the Saratov men boomed something approvingly and the rest were silent. Plekhanov, who had been about to sit down on his raincoat, jumped to his feet.

In that case, gentlemen, I have no further business here. Good-bye!"

He bent to pick up his raincoat and, swinging it rather slowly and with a rather pathetic solemnity—probably he was expecting to be called back—walked away in the direction of the forest. No one did call him back. Guilt and remorse was written on all faces. Vera Filippova whispered, "Gentlemen, you must bring him back!"

Andrei and the Janitor exchanged glances. They understood each other without words. The Janitor said in the toneless, *directorial* voice that he sometimes had, "No, sad though it may be, we should not bring him back."

Plekhanov left. Not a single person, even among his closest associates—Popov, Shchedrin, Preobrazhensky or Kharizomenov—followed him. There was no split. And yet a sense of depression, vaguely oppressive, was felt by all. No one had followed him *yet;* there had been no split *yet*. They set about electing an editorial board of three persons: Tikhomirov and Morozov were proposed, and to replace Plekhanov someone suggested the "Lawyer", Preobrazhensky. Unexpectedly the Janitor—everyone's nerves were on edge—blazed up, "Oh no, anyone else, but not him, not the Lawyer! He's a Narodnik if ever there was one!" There was a stunned silence and a storm nearly broke, but Maria Nikolayevna with her superb coolness remarked, "Oh, Janitor! How badly brought up you are! That's no way to talk of present company. Besides, not all of us have the same opinion of the Lawyer as you have." This half-jesting reprimand cut the tension. Preobrazhensky himself proposed Aptekman, a small, youthfully frail person but reputed to be a dedicated and honest Land and Freedom supporter. But Aptekman flatly refused. Then they went back to Preobrazhensky and he was made the third member of the editorial board. After this three people were elected to the Management Commission: Mikhailov, Frolenko and Tigrych. There seemed to be a note of conciliation in the air, but the sense of depression, of uncertainty, having once arisen, would not disappear. They were trying not to shift or upset anything, not to let each other down, but when such an effort is needed to save a friendship, things are in a bad way.

And only Andrei, perhaps the only one among them all, experienced no sense of foreboding, no pangs of conscience. The old ways were crumbling—well, let them! They were not his ways. The ladies were particularly upset. That was natural enough, of course, they had sensitive natures. When Sonya Perovskaya, dismayed at Plekhanov's departure, was whispering now to one, now to another and seemed to be urging some course of action, Andrei took the opportunity of asking her, "Are you very disappointed?"

She sensed the mockery in his tone and answered sharply:

"Yes, I am! I don't like conspiracies and coups. We shan't profit by them either ourselves or in our struggle. There will be no order!" And suddenly turning to Mikhailo Frolenko, who was sitting next to Andrei, "And you, Sir, have been acting in a very strange manner!"

Mikhailo, good-natured fellow that he was, blushed and even scrambled to his feet.

"What do you mean, Sonya?"

He knew perfectly well what.

"If you had to invite Maria Nikolayevna..." she lowered her voice because Tikhomirov and Morozov were still arguing with one of the "villagers" rather noisily and Titych was trying to pour oil on troubled waters. Leaning towards Mikhailo she whispered, "She and I were on a job together in Kharkov, so why forget about me? And what's wrong with me anyway? Am I a carrier of some disease? You rotten devils, you evil sorcerers!" And as if in jest, but with a good deal of force she cuffed the back of Mikhailo's head.

"Sonya, my love, nobody forgot about you but, honestly, I considered you an incorrigible Narodnik," Mikhailo muttered in great confusion. "Please, forgive me...."

"Oh, no, I shall never forgive you!"

She walked away wagging her finger and smiling, but her face was angry and it was clear that she meant it. She never would forgive him.

Eventually the long day of argument and emotional stress came to an end. They were all tired and hungry, and the women were complaining of headaches. What a grand thing it would be to go to some restaurant or tavern and have a good supper and wine! Morozov and that jolly fellow Titych took to the idea at once: "Why not? Let's do that! Let's all go! *A capella*!" The Janitor, of course, put a stop to that at once,

"No *a capella*! We are going to disperse in small groups." It so happened that when leaving Andrei and Mikhailo found themselves with Sonya and Tanya Lebedeva, then Mikhailo and Tanya took their leave and disappeared and Andrei was left alone with Sonya. They decided to go and eat in a tavern. Andrei liked the little woman. He enjoyed teasing her. He could not get over the idea that she was a real aristocrat, a daughter of a former governor of St. Petersburg! Indeed, so Tigrych had told him, she was the great-great-granddaughter of the famous Kirill Razumovsky, the last hetman of the Ukraine. He wondered with amusement and curiosity how it was that she had broken with her family and home? After all, it was out of despair with life that people became revolutionaries, whereas in this case....

"Looking at you, Boris," she said, "no one would think you were in despair with life either. A great big fellow like you, with that cheerful, rubicund face...."

"That's my peasant nature, I can't help it. But I've tasted the bitter side of life, I know what it's all about. I didn't have to go among the people and repay any debts."

"You know what I would say to you? It's just as stupid to boast of one's peasant origin as it is to boast of aristocratic descent."

"Would you, now? I wouldn't have said it was the same thing."

"It's just as nasty. I love the common folk, I have supreme respect for them, perhaps I even treat some of them better than they deserve—only because I admire the life of labour, the sufferings, the poverty. But when one suddenly comes up against this kind of opinionatedness, this boasting of being a man of the people—one never finds it in the country, only in town, among the factory workers, even in our workers' study circles—I find it disgusting. It makes you think, is this what I'm sacrificing my life for, for this opinionated fool?"

"Did it never occur to you that Russia's boyars have been boasting of their origins for a thousand years, while we lowly folk, the underdogs, the mere cattle, have only just begun to realise, in the last fifteen years or so, who we are? We've only just lifted our heads a bit and already you are disgusted."

She looked at him, as if from aside, thoughtfully.

"All right. Then I'll tell you what." Her fingers touched his hand. That gesture of conciliation must have meant a lot to her.

"Don't let's value people for their origins, all right? Or for their race, religion, education, but for what God or nature endowed them with."

He nodded smiling. Somehow she seemed so much in earnest. She was like one of those serious high schoolgirls, the kind who borrowed books from libraries, spent all their time discussing higher things and cared for nothing but learning. It was incredible that this pink-cheeked young lady should be renowned for so many exploits. Her brilliant escape from an armed escort in Chudovo, for example. After the Big Trial she had been arrested in the south and taken by train into exile in the Olonets Province, and at Chudovo station, where the train had stopped for some time, she had asked to be allowed to go to the ladies' room. The gendarmes had taken her there, stationed themselves at the door and, probably because they were drunk, had dozed off. She had calmly waited for the departing whistle of the Petersburg train, stepped across the sleeping guards and disappeared. (Mikhailo had told the story last year.) Now in the tavern Andrei deliberately went on testing his companion's aristocratism. He ordered the crudest and cheapest dish available—cabbage soup with salted ox cheeks. She ate hungrily, regardless of what she was eating. He watched her out of the corner of his eye. He liked watching her.

Suddenly she said, "One day I'll tell you why I became a revolutionary."

"One day? Why not now?"

"No."

"Tell me now."

"No, I don't feel like it at the moment."

"But do tell me!" He took her small hand with its plump little fingers and squeezed it. He kept squeezing it harder and harder. It must have hurt. She looked at him smiling and her eyes, which were a gentle greyish blue, shone with unshakeable self-possession.

She shook her head. He released his hold, leaving a white mark on her hand.

"With me it began from a hatred of despotism. One day I'll tell you. There are all kinds of despotism—domestic, family. But the worst is when they make you do something against your will."

After that they talked at length about the society, about Plekhanov's withdrawal, and of how things would go in future.

She insisted that she would never agree to abandon work among the people for the sake of terrorism. Political terror could only be a supplementary means, never a universal one. Georges was the cleverest of men, a person with real knowledge of Marx and Lassalle. There was no one to equal him as a theoretician. As for his practical abilities—who had organised the demonstration in Kazan Square? Who had first raised the red flag in the Land and Freedom movement? Yes, but it was just because he was more of a theoretician than a practical man that he could not see the uselessness of work among the people. They would all be hanged before they could shift that huge rock one millimetre. Not at all, they would sooner be hanged if they engaged in open battle—that would mean instant destruction. Then why hadn't she followed Plekhanov if she was such an opponent of terror? No, she was not opposed to it but she did not see salvation in terror. She was opposed to a split, to disunity, because that would really be the end, and that was why she had not followed Plekhanov. And no matter how much Andrei argued, how furiously he put his case, despite all the examples he cited, she stood her ground; no, that way would get them nowhere, it would not free Russia. The autocracy could be overthrown only by long and patient work among the people.

"I used to think so too, devil take you, you obstinate woman!" Andrei shouted, losing his control. "But now! Just look around you! Don't you see what's going on? Don't you understand that within six months we'll all be caught and crushed like mice?"

"Probably. But why are you shouting at me? I agreed, didn't I? I didn't go away, I'm going to practise terror if it's necessary. And regicide too. But I can have my own, independent opinion, can't I?"

"Yes, you can. But you've got to grasp these things."

"And why are you so zealous about terror, why are you getting in with the terrorists? You are a famous constitutionalist. Prince Vasilchikov would be nearer your mark...."

"What do you know about me?" Furious now, Andrei actually thumped the table with his fist.

"You make wonderful speeches. You're a great talker."

"Me—a great talker?"

"Of course, you are. You're training for the Constituent Assembly...."

A menacing-looking trio with the dark surly faces of tavern drunkards rose from the next table. Evidently they had been listening for some time.

"Hey you there, Mister, don't upset the lady...."

"String along with us, Mashka! Give him the go-by!"

One of them was already reaching out to grab Sonya. It really was an awful hole that he had brought her to. Andrei was making up his mind which one to hit first when Sonya suddenly let fly at those drunken loafers with such vehemence that they staggered back and withdrew. Even Andrei himself was astonished. They went out into the street, into the stuffy darkness. Andrei laughed. Well, she hadn't wasted her time among the people after all; at least she knew how to talk to them! And all the way to the house where she and Tanya Lebedeva were living they went on arguing about the same thing, not sparing their tempers or their voices.

And the next day they argued too, he was trying to win her over to his side, to the Executive Committee. He argued that a split was inevitable in any case. At the last session financial questions had to be decided. Passions could flare up again over how much the "villagers" were to have, and how much was to go on terror. Andrei had been advised (especially by the Janitor) not to speak, so as not to aggravate the situation. He had already identified himself as the most determined supporter of the new line, and one who, in addition, was not in the least concerned to preserve unity. It had no value for him. So in obedience to their request, he kept in the background and listened to what was said, and discussed things in a low voice with Sonya or with some of the waverers.

It was decided not to spend more than one-third of all the available funds on terror and to keep the remaining two-thirds for work in the countryside. The Janitor tried to protest, though not very sharply, and Andrei himself stopped him with a gesture. After all, it was clear that there was no real prospect for work in the country, it was all a myth, a fancy, a cherished but fruitless dream. Parting with one's illusions was always painful. Even Perovskaya, although she stubbornly maintained, "I shall never on any account abandon work in the country!" was clearly in an agony of doubt. She and her friend Tanya and Vera Figner (otherwise known as Filippova) talked a lot of nonsense about the Executive Committee intimidating them. Was this not a kind of Nechayev tactics! Conspiracy,

hiding things from one's comrades, the urge to kill.... It had to be explained to them that the conspiracy was aimed not against their own comrades but against the common enemy. Secrecy had been maintained for only a few days, but now everything was in the open again and everyone at liberty to act according to his own lights. And there was no need to tremble and gnash one's teeth at the mere mention of "Nechayev tactics". That started it! The women punched on Andrei with shrieks and curses, almost ready to beat him. How dare he say such a thing? What could they have in common with that dirty trickster and blackmailer? Such talk meant that he understood nothing about the Russian liberation movement! Nechayev had deceived the dying Herzen! He had blackmailed Ogarev! Vera Zasulich had spoken of his shameless swindles! Bakunin had disowned him! When he had been arrested by the Swiss police not a single Russian student (Vera would swear to it) would lift a finger to rescue him! To have killed an innocent person! The Jesuit of revolution. He was entirely a product of Machiavelli's book *The Monarch.* Remember the translation of it by Baron Zatler, published in '69? If it came to that....

At this point the rain came down in sheets. They ran to the trees for shelter but the downpour was too heavy. It grew dark in an instant, the grass began to steam and someone shouted that they would have to make for the pavilion by the pond. They ran in a merry crowd, the women holding up their skirts, gasping and squealing. Andrei picked up Vera in his arms, someone else took Sonya, and they made their way in leaps and bounds; the Sparrow lost his spectacles, Maria Nikolayevna, running barefoot, slipped and fell. Everyone was laughing, they threw themselves exhausted and laughter-striken on the floor. A lady and gentleman looked round indignantly. All eyes were shining, faces wet and red. Verochka suddenly began to sing "The Impetuous Flood" in a powerful, happy voice. The rain beat down on the wooden roof with a mounting roar.

The instability that Andrei had sensed soon showed itself. Two months after Voronezh they were still fighting, trying to be patient, restraining themselves, making mutual concessions of all kinds—trivial, insignificant but apparently impor-

tant—and yet things were going irreparably wrong. The "villagers" were pursuing their line, while the Executive Committee stuck to its own. And when it became finally clear that there was no sense in torturing themselves or others any longer it was decided to split up. They shared out the name Zemlya i Volya (Land and Freedom).* The supporters of political terror took the word "Freedom" and called themselves "People's Freedom", and the others took the word "Land" and invented for themselves the name "Cherny Peredel", in which "black" stood for the "black earth". (This was the ancient peasant dream, the idea that the land should be shared out according to how many mouths there were to feed, a dream that the Chigirin revolutionaries, Deutsch and Stefanovich, with their "Pugachev" scheme had counted on.) They divided up their property, i.e., the printing press, and shared out their funds. Once this had happened, and it happened in August, at Lesnoye, near Petersburg, the terrorists and future assassins of the Emperor breathed with relief and got down to business. They knew that they were soon to die, perhaps very soon, that very autumn of 1879, but they were firmly convinced that by their death they would bring salvation and happiness to their country. So they worked in all haste, trying not to lose a single day, a single hour.

Chapter Four

On one of the last days of summer at a country house in Lesnoye near Petersburg the members of the Executive Committee passed the decision to execute Emperor Alexander II on his return journey by train from Livadia to the capital. The Emperor usually returned from the south in November. This meant that they had two months—September and October—to set up sufficient traps to make the Emperor's destruction inevitable. All routes had to be barred. This would not be so difficult if one used one's head. There were two routes: the railway line from Simferopol through Kharkov, Kursk and Moscow, and the sea route as far as Odessa, and then by train for the rest of the way. Most likely the Emperor would use the

* The Russian word "volya" means both "freedom" and "will"—*Tr.*

railway from Simferopol, but Odessa could not be left out of their reckoning. So they sent Mikhailo Frolenko there and concentrated their main forces on the Moscow-Kursk Railway. The Janitor along with Morozov, Hartmann and Perovskaya (by the end of the summer she had finally given up her stubborn support of the Narodniks and embraced terrorism) were to mine the track near Moscow, while Andrei volunteered to arrange a similar trap in the south, although he had not yet decided where—perhaps somewhere out in the open steppes between Simferopol and Kharkov.

Andrei was convinced that his mine would clinch matters from the start. If not, there would always be the one near Moscow. The tsar would have no chance of escaping. In November, this wretched tyrant would breathe his last and by Christmas the whole life of Russia would change. There would be a new political system, a constitution, representative government and a free press. And then the real struggle would begin for a people's government!

In a mood of joyful impatience Andrei set off post-haste for the south, through the heat and mellowness of the autumnal Russian plains. In Kharkov he stopped at the Monastery Inn. He had a good many acquaintances among the local people. One of the best and most devoted was Ivan Glushkov, "Ionych", an old friend from the days of his propaganda circles in Odessa. But just now, at the beginning of September, Ionych was thinking of disappearing because of the danger gathering around him. The new governor-general of Kharkov, Loris-Melikov, who had succeeded Kropotkin, assassinated by Grishka, had been acting far more cunningly but also with deliberate purpose. The circle run by Dmitry Butsinsky, an efficient young man who had much in common with Andrei and called himself a "statist" (they had met cursorily the year before and Sonya Perovskaya had told Andrei a lot about him), had been badly mauled in spring. Loris-Melikov's spies were looking for the killers of Kropotkin. They had caught several people already and in April Butsinsky fled from Kharkov. Now there was general confusion, people were lying low, but the meetings, quite peaceful without any bloodthirstiness—just readings and arguments about socialism—still went on in the occasional student flat.

Ionych quickly introduced Andrei to the local carbonari. The most notable among them was, of course, the "Elder",

Pyotr Abramovich Tellalov, a man of Andrei's own age or perhaps a year younger, with a good deal of experience. In 1874, as a student at the Mining Institute, he had been sentenced to exile for taking part in the "disturbances". Andrei brought him greetings from Petersburg. Grishka Goldenberg, who soon appeared in the city, also knew Tellalov and recommended him as a most dedicated person. Ionych and the Elder were the two men he could rely on, but Ionych was already packing up his few belongings. The rest of the locals were raw young people, slightly scared and slightly frivolous, who had only hearsay knowledge of everything. The devil only knew what they were up to! The Elder recounted how funds were being obtained for the group. They would get to work on the liberals. One lady, for example, the wife of the chairman of the Kharkov Chamber of Justice, had been so influenced by them that she gave the Elder the monthly sum of thirty-four rubles to support the socialists, and a student named Lyogky, aged eighteen, had found a splendid way of obtaining money. He would assure his fellow students at the Gymnasium that he could obtain from an official in the Ministry of Education school-leaving certificates that would enable them to apply for admission to the University. This mythical official, he told them, was a temporary visitor to the city and the price of each certificate was six hundred rubles. Lyogky accepted a deposit of three hundred rubles and two young asses had already been caught on this bait. Why take a lot of minor risks when one could go the whole hog and provide oneself with funds for two or three years ahead. The people here had a firm grasp of this notion and were mad on the idea of tunnelling under the Poltava Exchequer. The main thing, however—what to spend the money on?—was but dimly understood in Kharkov.

At one of the first meetings at a flat belonging to the students Kuznetsov and Blinov someone asked if it was true that the Petersburg Society for Changing the Political System of the State had split up into two factions—terrorists and Narodniks? He had to explain that there was no society with such a long name and that the Narodniks, who recognised terror as one of the means of struggle, had not thereby ceased to be Narodniks. Rumours of the split had reached here in the summer and put people's minds in a ferment. Grishka Goldenberg did a good deal of harm. Here, in Kharkov, the scene of his heroic exploit, he felt he was an infallible authority and kept himself

in an exalted state, expecting constant tributes of admiration, if only in the form of silent glances. He forbid all such nicknames for himself as Grishka, David or Beaconsfield and insisted on being called Fyodor. One of his boasts was that there was probably not another revolutionary in Russia who had sported as many aliases as he. From time to time he would take out of his pocket a small flask containing a transparent liquid and write something with it (important letters, presumably) on sheets of paper. As if he could not do his writing at home, by himself. The students stared at him open-mouthed, overawed by his *portentousness*. How could they fail to be? The person who had introduced Grishka to their circle had described him as a "singer" and "a friend of Kropotkin". Grishka had done his best to justify his reputation as a singer and, when serious discussions were over and the time came for conviviality, he would always sing Ukrainian songs. As for his being "a friend of Kropotkin's", the allusion was clear to all. This petty blowing of one's own trumpet, this tireless self-titillation was something that Andrei could not understand. What a lot of trash! How dare he swagger in front of a lot of youngsters at the risk of exposing himself and the whole cause? He took him to task about it, but Grishka merely raised his eyebrows, "Are you trying to teach me conspiracy?" He burst out laughing. "He's teaching me the rules of conspiracy! That's a fine story. My dear Boris, I haven's breathed a word, not a single word."

It was true that he had not. But he had certainly hinted, blast him!

"We shall not waste time as we used to on such trifles as the killing of Kropotkin and Mezentsev. We shall go for the main target—the tsar! And let everyone who sympathises with us but is wavering or afraid, which as a matter of fact are the same thing, know that we do not insist on the whole terrorist organisation taking part in this operation. All we need are certain individuals who feel they have a vocation for this type of thing. The others will merely co-operate. Ten hands cannot hold one dagger. An exploit is essentially something rare and entirely voluntary."

This was all true enough, but the tone, the air of infallibility, the implicit self-admiration that was always breaking out on the surface, were exasperating. To smooth over the impression caused by Grishka, Andrei spoke at some length. One of Grishka's respectful listeners, a youthful modern school pupil,

the son of the well-known Kharkov doctor Sitsyanko, timidly argued that they were not scared but wavering, because the terrorist path, as everyone knew, led to repressions and the sacrifice of innocent lives. He cited the example of the attack by Orsini some twenty years ago on Napoleon III, when the Emperor and Empress had escaped while the bomb that went off in a street near the theatre had killed ten people and wounded one hundred and fifty. Grishka grew angry and said that he would not advise anyone to get in the way of the chariot of history. Another question followed. What ways did the terrorists propose for obtaining a constitution? Grishka replied mysteriously, "It is too early to say yet, it's a secret."

Most of all Andrei feared that in Grishka's speeches the real reason for their arrival in Kharkov might slip out. He himself strove to give the impression that they had come purely as propagandists. He spoke on historical subjects, explained the essence of the class struggle according to Marx and, of course, spoke about terror, but calmly and unemotionally. Towards the end of the month, Kolodkevich arrived and was soon followed by Barannikov (now his name was Ippolit Koshurnikov) and Andrei's namesake Presnyakov. This was the first time Andrei had met Presnyakov. He was a tall, fair-haired man, pale, gloomy and thin, rather like a Petersburg artisan in appearance but, in fact, quite well educated. He had at one time studied at the Teachers' Institute. After that he had, admittedly, worked as a mechanic at a factory in Petersburg. Presnyakov was a man to be reckoned with. He had several exploits to his credit: the Kazan Square demonstration, escape from a police station and even bloodshed. It was said that he had killed a police spy two years ago. On introducing himself to Andrei he crushed his hand and said impressively, "Andrei Korneyevich". The look in "Andrei Korneyevich's" eyes was strangely fixed and watery. Andrei met his glance and thought, "Aha! Here's a useful man." Presnyakov and Barannikov had brought with them dynamite and wire.

Now they had to decide—where? They sat up for nights on end over the map. On the Committee's instructions Barannikov had already reconnoitred parts of the line. He left in a hurry for the Crimea but returned a few days later with the news that there was no suitable place in the south. Again they pored over the map and agreed that a suitable place might be Aleksandrovsk, a small town in the Yekaterinoslav Province.

Barannikov had been there during his student wanderings and Tellalov also knew the place; his brother lived in Aleksandrovsk and was engaged in trade. So it was to be Aleksandrovsk! He must go and have a look at it. There was plenty of time, about six weeks, but he still felt the need for haste. His impatience was ever with him. He had to go alone because Kolodkevich was due back in Odessa, where Vera and Mikhailo were waiting for him, Presnyakov was on his way to the Crimea to observe the tsar's movements (he had been given the address of a person Tellalov could vouch for in Simferopol), and Barannikov was in a hurry to get to Moscow. A tremendous amount of physical work would be needed there because they were building a tunnel and strong men were in demand.

Back in the middle of September, before leaving Kharkov, Ionych (Glushkov) had introduced Andrei to a man he now needed badly. It was time to prepare the mine! And not just one, but two. This person was a craftsman with a fine pair of hands, Vanichka Okladsky; he was both a locksmith and a tinsmith, knew a little about electricity and, above all, despite his youth, was well versed in revolutionary affairs, having been trained in the Petersburg study circles. Andrei had met Vanichka (for some reason everyone used this diminutive form of his name although the lad was already twenty) in Odessa some five years ago, but it had been a cursory acquaintance and was almost forgotten. But not quite. Though only a lad, he had spoken and behaved with a certain dignity, a touch of Petersburg arrogance about him. Now, although older, he looked less affected. But from time to time a flash of the old pomposity would appear.

As he was leaving, Ionych had said, "Vanichka will do everything for you."

They met on University Hill in the evening; there was a fine drizzle in the air and they suddenly felt the breath of winter and the coming cold. Andrei shivered, but Vanichka puffed himself up and boasted, "Just the weather for us, Petersburg people."

All right, let him think so. Like all craftsmen, even this greenhorn was anxious to make himself sought after. And yet Andrei liked him; he was a real worker, a man with a sense of his own worth but who in the years spent among the revolutionaries of Petersburg, and Odessa, too—he had known

Zaslavsky, Malinka, Rodionych and many others—had learnt that his duty, as one of the junior members of the group, was to obey. Where could one find a workman who was both experienced and could be fully trusted? And here was someone who, though young, was one of them.

After all, the purpose of the work could not be concealed. What sort of object was it to be? What kind of body should it have? What was it for? He would have to make it, so he must know.

So that evening, walking under the wet trees he told him everything. It amazed him when Vanichka expressed no surprise at all, not even a quiver of excitement. In a practical, business-like tone, like a tailor taking an order for a coat, he started asking about the length of the cylinder, the weight of the dynamite, what the casing was to be made of and the diameter of the earth auger that would be needed. They discussed the question. Vanichka said that he was working in Sitsyanko's workshop, where he would be able to obtain the necessary copper sheets and anything else that was needed, and if they ran short of anything there was another workshop, Yakubovich's, in the same house where the doctor lived. He knew all the lads there and would be able to get hold of the stuff. The actual killing of the tsar apparently did not strike Vanichka as a matter of any importance, he seemed not to give it a second thought; but getting the material and making the thing—that was the problem. So much the better, Andrei thought. That's the kind of person we need, someone who doesn't think too much.

They rented part of a house in Moskalevka Street and Vanichka told the mistress that he was going to work at the Pilstrem factory and was expecting his wife to arrive from the country. No one except Andrei knew about the house in Moskalevka Street. The cylinders for the mines were made of copper, about three feet long. The seams had to be good and tight, otherwise the nitroglycerine would leak away and the explosive power would be lost. Grishka Isayev, a scientifically-minded chap, had warned Andrei about this back in Petersburg and Vanichka worked diligently with his tinsmith's hammer, fashioning the metal.

Andrei trusted Vanichka. Yes, of course, he trusted him utterly because everyone else did. In Petersburg he had been spotted by the famous Dr. Ivanovsky, a propagandist, a most

intelligent and noble-hearted man. And yet the thought that he had told somebody the secret, somebody he knew well and intimately, but not that intimately, now began to cause Andrei much restless anxiety. Suppose, all of a sudden? After all, he was only young and very vulnerable, and there was nothing one could do about it. Andrei was aware of his own tendency to worry, it was a feverish unconquerable thing that could grip him like death itself. With envy he recalled Semyon's wife, Maria Nikolayevna Oshanina. How could she have fallen asleep at a time like that, when they were attacking the police escort? His target was still far away but the worry was in his head already and he could neither sleep nor find any peace in the daytime. The day before Barannikov was due to leave for Moscow Andrei told him that Vanichka was working and everything was going well but it would be a good thing to strengthen their hold on the lad. After all, he was not a member of the party, not an agent, he did not know the rules and had sworn no allegiance. Perhaps they ought to give him a scare?

Andrei remembered someone saying—it could have been Maria Nikolayevna?—that two people were needed for accepting new members: Zhelyabov, to talk to them, and Barannikov, to frighten them. And it was a fact that Semyon had that kind of face—motionlessly sombre and savage, like an Italian *bandito*. He had inherited his looks from his mother. He was a great person, Andrei had made firm friends with him in a few days. "All right, we'll have a talk!" Semyon assented.

Vanichka was summoned and all three of them went to a cheap eating house in Mordvinovsky Lane, a place they often visited because it was run by the widow of Zaslavsky, an Odessa man who had died a year ago, poor fellow, in prison. The woman was always on the verge of tears. She was warmly attached, almost affectionate to Andrei and remembered him from Odessa. One day she had come up very close, muttering incoherently:

"They never told me anything, but I found out for sure—Zhenya went mad. It was the way they treated him. And such a fine man...." Her lips were trembling, her eyes full of tears. Bringing her face suddenly very close and giving him a specially significant look, she whispered, "You must always remember that!"

And she walked away without waiting for a reply.

This time, when they took Vanichka, she was not there. The serving was done by a strange fat girl and any discussion had to be conducted with caution.

Semyon talked about his past, about his childhood in Putivl and how he had got out of the Pavlovsk Military School by feigning suicide in the Neva, how he had roamed across Russia, fought in Montenegro in Peko Pavlović's detachment. While he talked, his squinting black eyes shot penetrating glances at Vanichka, but he remained oblivious to their penetrating quality and went on eating and drinking without a care in the world. Semyon recalled how the Montenegrins took revenge on traitors. For even the slightest betrayal, a mere chance word, the penalty was a dagger in the heart.

"That's understandable enough," Vanichka agreed. "They couldn't do it any other way, could they?"

"They're very keen on revenge!" Semyon said, frowning threateningly.

"They have to be."

"There's a Montenegrin saying *'bez osveteh nema posveteh'*. It means, no salvation without revenge. Understand?"

But it all fell on deaf ears. Vanichka seemed not to sense the direction the conversation was taking. Then Semyon's huge hand descended on the frail scruff of Vanichka's neck and, pushing his head down almost into his plate, he whispered into his ear, "If you let slip just one little word ... get me?" He must have squeezed Vanichka's neck pretty hard because the lad suddenly went pale and croaked hoarsely. Semyon released him. He straightened up and looked round blinking his red but still unfrightened eyes, heaved a deep breath and smiled joyfully as the reason downed on him.

"Did you mean to give me a warning? Well, that's all correct, of course. Only I'll tell you this, Mister..." He winked cunningly, still rubbing his neck. "I've been working in the revolutionary movement a good bit longer than you. Why should you warn me? I was yanked off into clink when I was a kid of twelve. And I can tell you, in the words of Stenka Razin, 'Even knightly valour is the force of no avail against a flying cannon ball!' That's what engineer Levitsky taught me, out of a book."

"All right, keep your trap shut and remember that saying, *bez osveteh nema posveteh.* There will be no salvation."

"I know that!" Vanichka dismissed the subject with a laugh. "I understood that before you! Some wisdom that!"

At that moment Grishka Goldenberg burst into the room, blathering about a museum of historic objects that someone—no one knew who!—had suggested organising.

"I'm to give them the revolver—you know the one I mean," Grishka rattled on in something less than a whisper. "And Sergei's dagger, that was also made famous.... And you, Boris, can give them—but no, not yet, it's too early yet! Don't count your chickens, eh! All right, I'm keeping mum!"

As he set out for Aleksandrovsk, Andrei wondered rather anxiously if Grishka would be able to keep a proper watch on Vanichka's work. He would get carried away by some nonsense and forget the main thing. Grishka had been eager to go off to Moscow with Semyon but had been firmly told—not until Andrei returned from Aleksandrovsk after getting the work going.

Aleksandrovsk turned out to be a stagnant provincial backwater with only its being the centre of an uyezd to commend it—in fact, it was just a big village of about six thousand inhabitants. It stood on a trickle of a river called the Mokraya Moskovka, some two versts from the Dnieper. All around lay the black autumn ploughlands with their ravines and ancient burial mounds, and not far away, on the Dnieper, was the famous island of Khortitsa, where the members of Zaporozhye Sech lived and where there was now a German Mennonite colony. In a hired cab Andrei toured the district, looking for a site for a tannery. He was supposed to be a merchant, one Cheremisov, who had come here from Yaroslavl in the hope of making money quickly in the tannery business. He looked just like a merchant and his talk was business-like. Even in Kharkov he had often been taken for a merchant because he went about in a black high-necked jacket, a peaked cap and Russian top-boots. Driving round the town with the stock exchange cabman Mikola Sagaidachny—they had first met the day before at the station, where Mikola had been waiting for fares at the cab rank—he asked in a quiet way about life in Aleksandrovsk, about the merchants, the police chief, and the mayor—a Gospodin Demogani. Aha, Andrei thought cheerfully for some reason, we'll get on all right, this

isn't the first time I've had dealings with a Greek. He tried to remember a few Greek words that had stuck in his mind from the days of his youth, only to check himself abruptly. They would be quite useless, there would be no reason for a Yaroslavl merchant to know such things.

He explained to Mikola that what he needed was a place with a pit nearby where waste could be dumped. They found such a place, very convenient, only about five hundred yards from the railway, on the first day, but the municipal Duma objected on the grounds that they might pollute the river Moskovka. Andrei offered Gospodin Demogani a gift of gratitude for his help in this matter—not that he was desperately keen on taking this first and very convenient site but mainly because this was how merchant Cheremisov would surely have acted—but the Greek stood firm and persisted in his refusal. There was still time, however—at least a month. The Emperor usually returned to the capital in the middle or the last ten days of November. Andrei spotted another site, somewhat further from the line—this gave it the advantage of not being so suspicious!—and, having rented a two-room flat with a kitchen at eight rubles a month for the next six months and signed a contract to that effect, he left his new friend Mikola ten rubles to buy furniture and hurried off to Kharkov.

Here things were taking their natural course. Vanichka was working and had found some assistants. An acquaintance of his, Kolya, had turned up. He seemed to be a loyal fellow, but they had not told him the whole story, and rightly so. At the end of September, a friend of Presnyakov's Yashka Tikhonov, had arrived from Rostov. He had been told everything and had agreed at once. They would have to take him with them to Aleksandrovsk, where manpower for the digging would be needed. And finally the "wife of merchant Cheremisov" arrived from St. Petersburg. She was "Maria Petrovna", otherwise known as Anya Yakimova, alias Baska.

They were all tough and experienced people.

Andrei had known Baska since the days of the Big Trial. In the spring she had been a member of Shirayev's "Freedom or Death" group. Admittedly, the group had never managed to do anything but before the congress it had created a special *terroristic atmosphere,* and in summer she and Shirayev had run a dynamite workshop together. Yashka Tikhonov had been tried for spreading propaganda among the Petersburg

workers (he himself was a weaver and mechanic, a true proletarian); he had been exiled to the Archangel Province, from where he had escaped. And then there was Vanichka himself! He knew everyone and they all knew him. Vanichka's experience was enormous. He had rearranged his life at once; he visited no one and no one visited him. One day, while Andrei was in Aleksandrovsk, Vanichka had a row with Goldenberg and for a good reason. Grishka had turned up in Moskalevka Lane at some unearthly hour to see Vanichka and find out how things were going. Vanichka had almost started punching him. "Don't you know what you're doing, you dope? To think that such a fool could ever have shot at Kropotkin!"

Good for him. Grishka complained to Andrei, "He turned me out of the house and wouldn't show me a thing. The young pup! He had better thank God that I was unarmed. I won't take rudeness from anyone!"

Grishka was itching to get to Moscow. Unable to contain his impatience, he had gone to Vanichka's with the idea of speeding things up. But it had been agreed that no one was to visit the house in Moskalevka Lane. They met only at certain appointed spots. Andrei, for example, would contact Vanichka on University Hill. But just try to explain that to Grishka with his high-handed ways! And there had been another unpleasant incident, with the local policeman. When working on the cylinder with his tinsmith's hammer, Vanichka, of course, made a lot of noise. The policeman came round to say that their neighbour, a sick government official, was complaining. Could the noise not be stopped? And what was this workshop anyway? Vanichka kept his head and invented a story that he was making stills for a distilling factory. The policeman was a portly, slow-moving man and did not trouble to go into the yard. He merely wagged a threatening finger and said grimly, "Don't bang so hard. You're disturbing the peace...."

But suppose one day he did come in to see what this apparatus was? Vanichka realised at once that there was no point in tempting fate and he had better move out right away.

Andrei was now living at the Sumskoye hostelry. When Vanichka had said that only two more days would be needed to finish the job he had sighed with relief and decided to spend the time studying the book *Leather Production* that he had bought back in Petersburg. There had been no time for reading but he needed to do so. Suddenly he received a message,

brought by Kolka, Vanichka's mate. It was written in code. Here, in Kharkov, the code word was "SHTUNDISTY". Andrei had not yet got used to deciphering in his head and he had to put it down on paper. He wrote the letters vertically, Chinese fashion, and then added to each letter nine more letters taken in alphabetical order.

The resulting message was: "Find another place at once. 5 p. m. on the hill." He arrived on University Hill at five. Vanichka was already pacing about there with a grim look of concentration on his face. He related the incident of the policeman. What were they to do? Move out? Andrei asked whether there was much more to be done. Vanichka said that one good night's work would be enough, but shrugged uncertainly and left Andrei to decide. All right, then, they would risk waiting until morning. It was no good taking the cylinders unfinished. Besides, they still had to find a place for them.

That evening Grishka ran over to the Elder's and they went together to Blinov, a student, who was warned that the following day a certain thing would be brought to his place. What thing? It would have to be hidden. And no questions asked. Would he be at home during the day? Blinov, a sickly, weak-chested lad, began coughing and moaning. "I don't really know. There are other people living here besides me. I'll have to ask Kuznetsov and he's out at the moment, doing a test in anatomy...." But Grishka took matters into his own hands. He had been living with them uninvited for the best part of a fortnight already. "All right, then, Mitrofan, we see your point. You're an honest man but a bit on the timid side. Never mind. Just stay at home and wait." The next morning, Andrei took a cab and went to Moskalevka Lane. Vanichka carried out both cylinders tied together and well wrapped up in sackcloth. A good two poods in weight. They picked up Grishka and drove to Blinov's, where they pushed the bundle under a bed.

Blinov wanted to know what it was.

"What is this thing?"

"Dynamite! Bang-bang!" Grishka said, winking comically. "I'm going to sleep in that bed, let it blow me to blazes and may the devil take me! You're scared, ehe? Ha-ha! You believed me? Ha-ha! Don't worry, it's not dynamite at all, it's just iron. *Ferrum, Eisen, la fer.* You're a fine old coward, Mitrofan!"

"I was only saying that Kuznetsov is away.... He is taking a test in anatomy...."

"Now just remember this, Mitrofan," Grishka wagged his finger. "The first rule of any revolutionary party is to trust in authority and be able to obey. And the second rule is contempt of death. Get it? Or do I need to explain?"

Blinov said that there was no need and asked no more questions. In the two hours they spent together making tea on a spirit stove, chatting and discussing the first number of the new revolutionary newspaper *Narodnaya Volya* that had just arrived from Petersburg, Blinov did not once glance under the bed at the "thing". He did not even look in that direction. Nevertheless Andrei decided that the mines should be moved elsewhere, to a safer place. But it was too early to take them to Aleksandrovsk. They had still to obtain an earth auger, sheets of zinc and one or two other things that Vanichka had been promised in the various workshops. So it all depended on Vanichka's "ready!". Kuznetsov arrived, having taken his test in anatomy, evidently without much success—hence his irritation—and that evening raised a rumpus. "What right had you to do it? Taking advantage of a person's absence...." So Vanichka brought in Sasha Sitsyanko, the doctor's son, who instantly agreed to cart the mysterious metal object home with him. He would be only too glad to do so, they had a half-built wing of the house where you could keep anything for six months if necessary. The builders would not start work again till the spring.

Like Blinov and Kuznetsov, he probably thought that the sackcloth bundle contained parts of a printing press. He collected the "thing" and carted it home. Grishka was due to leave on the night train for Moscow. They held a kind of farewell supper at Zaslavskaya's restaurant and there were more arguments about terrorism.

Sasha Sitsyanko, the youngest and, so it seemed to Andrei, the most sincere Narodnik, his beardless schoolboy's face pale with tension, actually gave his consent to political killing but only on one, very important condition.

"A life for a life. The person who kills must give his own life as well—put himself voluntarily at the mercy of his enemies. That will be only just."

"How can you talk of justice when you are dealing with a government of executioners?" Grishka flared. "Do they treat

us with any justice at all? Why did they hang Lizogub, the most honest of men? Why were Gorsky and Bilchansky executed? Vittenberg and Logovenko? So you want to act like gentlemen with the gang of murderers!"

"Besides, your condition is found to be fulfilled in any case," Andrei said. "Anyone who undertakes terror condemns himself to death. We all know that."

"Oh, no!" Sasha insisted. "The whole force of the idea is to give yourself up deliberately and not just because they have tracked you down and caught you."

"And they don't catch everyone, luckily," Blinov remarked. "You, Beaconsfield, are still alive and well, thank God!"

Grishka was about to say something but could only open his mouth in surprise. Apparently he was a little tipsy because his face was red, he spoke volubly, and there was foam at the corners of his mouth, but this surprise remark seemed to sober him up at once, almost visibly. After all, none of the young people were supposed to know for sure that Grishka had fired the shot at Kropotkin, they had been left to guess, but it was breaking all the rules of conspiracy to mention it aloud.

Grishka said calmly, "You are alive and well too, Mitrofan, thank God. As for myself, I am alive and well because my hand is still strong and can carry a gun." He held out his bony, ginger-haired fist. "And may it still serve the revolution."

Andrei said that a life for a life would be too costly, there were not enough of them. But Sasha Sitsyanko was not to be put off. How else could the stain of blood be removed? Grishka blazed into fury. Ah, so he wanted to make a revolution on the basis of the laws of Moses? And this, when the main public figure in Russia today was the hangman Frolov? And that set them off again with all the old pros and cons. God, how sick he was of this hurdy-gurdy! None of them (except Grishka and the Elder) knew that it was too late to argue. In a day or two from now the sackcloth bundle of mines that were to change the fate of Russia, and perhaps the whole world, would be travelling in a third-class carriage to Aleksandrovsk.

The cold wet autumn descended upon them. Water streamed down from the high ground into the hollows and mudded up the wide ravine where they would have to lie still as corpses, waiting for the moment. It was like a flooded

graveyard. You could almost see the coffins floating in the cold water amid the gloom of approaching winter. All their work had to be done at night. During the day they slept, chatted to the owners of the house, played with the dog, sat over endless games of cards, went out on all sorts of important business to do with the building of the tannery, the shops, the buying of horses and a cart from a cabman known as Shampansky, and at night in the grave-like darkness they lay in wait. Yashka Tikhonov kept watch on one side, the Lozovaya side, and Vanichka, on the Aleksandrovsk side. It was Andrei's job to drill through the embankment with the auger and place the mines himself. That was his job! The only trouble was the difficulty of seeing in the dark. His sight had not been so good of late anyway and at nighttime it was no good at all. Even Yashka and Vanichka, who had good eyesight, were several nights learning how to find the ravine in the darkness. Sometimes they would get lost, spend the whole night roaming about and return with nothing done. Baska would greet them as usual with exclamations of horror: "Mother of God! What a terrible sight!" They would come back covered in mud from head to foot, and wet to the skin. The stove had to be kept going all round the clock to dry their clothes. It took them two or even three nights to lay the fuse, from the cart-track that ran between Aleksandrovsk and the village of Sofiyevka parallel with the railway and about eight hundred yards away from it. This meant dragging the wire to the ravine, going right down to the bottom, then climbing up the slope to the embankment. In daylight it would have been easy but it had to be done in pitch darkness and not only without lighting so much as a match or shining a lantern, but without making the slightest noise. The railway guards were constantly on patrol. God knows why they were so suspicious? They must have sensed something, or else it was the general alarm that had not died down since Solovyov's attempt. Or perhaps some betrayal, some vague hint from a distance had alerted them? If any direct instructions had been given, the whole of Aleksandrovsk would have been swamped with blue uniforms and plainclothesmen, but there was no sign of this. All was quiet, the only snooping was along the line. There was, however, another cause for alarm—the rain. The water pouring into the ravine brought with it all kinds of rubbish, twigs, clods of earth, which blocked up the drain pipe under the

embankment, turning the ravine into a small lake. The water rose steadily, soaking into the embankment and softening its foundations. This was dangerous: the embankment might simply collapse, as had happened recently somewhere. It had been in the papers. The track had fallen apart, several carriages had been derailed and plunged into the mud, killing the passengers. In fear of such an eventuality, the authorities sent workers with lanterns to examine the embankment and the drain. Four or five times a night the linesmen would turn up near the ravine to inspect, flashing their lanterns and talking to each other—the patter of the rain made it hard to hear what was being said and probably they were not saying much except to curse the November weather, the downpour and their superiors—but the three lay at the bottom of the ravine in the dank darkness, holding their breath. And their bodies soaked up water like the embankment and felt as if they were about to crumble.

The trick was to wait for the right moment. The inspections were made at intervals of about two hours but, besides the linesmen, there were also patrols of armed policemen in civilian clothes. They were not interested in the tricks of nature or technical troubles. Their sole concern was with malevolent mankind. It was difficult to spot these gentlemen at night, to distinguish them from the railway rank-and-file. They too carried lanterns and muttered curses, but they had been seen twice in daylight and their clean-shaven faces and long raincoats gave them away at once. Rumour had it that Drenteln's department had scattered them all along the line from Simferopol to Moscow. The guards, the gendarmes, the occasional tramps wandering along the track, and the passing trains, all created a formidable obstacle and kept them waiting. They just had to lie there and wait. The only task now was to plant the cylinders in the holes that had been drilled in the embankment. The cart stood some distance away and could not come any nearer because there was no road. They carried the cylinders into the ravine and waited. The night before they had waited in vain. Something had always prevented them, as if fate had turned against them. They began to feel desperate and their strength was ebbing. Surely these small things, just some drunken fool out wandering, could not prevent them? Suddenly he was assailed by a wild, momentary recklessness, a darkening of the mind: "Let's risk it!" That was the temptation, to crawl into trouble. No patience could stand this, it was

too much, impossible. But they lay still, without moving a muscle and waited. They waited and waited, slowly turning into something damp, numb, inhuman. But it was no good and before dawn came they dragged the cylinders back to the cart and drove home.

Yet another night. Again they trotted the cart as far as the ravine, took out the cylinders, those great heavy things, half a hundredweight each, and carrying them carefully in case they suddenly blew up made their way into the dark depths of the ravine. Vanichka crawled away to the right and Yashka, to the left, and there they lay, waiting. Waiting and waiting. There was nothing for it but to wait.

But during this blind, exhausting, suffocating vigil he would have thoughts. It would occur to him, for example, that all life is a waiting for death. Only we don't notice it. The waiting goes on deep inside us, in the innermost recesses of our being. But when it rises from the depths and fills us overwhelmingly—this expectation of death—then it is almost death itself. The expectation of death is death. The last thing he saw was the slope of the embankment running with black liquid mud. In these seconds of near oblivion, total deadening of consciousness, he imagined that he was already there, beyond the borders of this world, and was looking at this mud, this rain, this cold wind, even the shaking of his own frozen hands and the chattering of his teeth from somewhere *out there,* from *those* distant borders. And later there were other moments when he came to himself and wondered enviously, despairingly, why he had not died. After all, it would have been so simple to die at that moment, when the overwhelming sensation of death was in him. It would have brought peace, tranquillity. But no, that was forbidden. He had done nothing as yet to deserve death. He must wait and go on waiting.

When the night was nearly over the moment came. Vanichka crawled down the slope and they picked up their burden together and carried it. It was the work of a moment. Vanichka helped him so deftly, changing his grip at just the right moments. But with the second mine—a hole for it had been drilled about a hundred yards from the first—they nearly ran into trouble. Suddenly a watchman appeared. For some reason he was alone and carrying no lantern, so they were late in spotting him. Yashka spotted him and they had to heave out

the cylinder which they had already half-inserted in its hole and slither away down the slope. They lay at the bottom pressing themselves into the ground, afraid to breathe. They were saved by a sudden gust of wind bringing wet snow instead of rain. It was their lucky night. They planted the two mines and Vanichka wired them together. Now came the last job—laying a wire from the second mine along the bottom of the ravine to the road. But this was easier, much easier! The worst was over. Now they must have a day's rest.

Baska washed, scrubbed, dried, ironed, and the men fetched water and chopped wood, but all the same it was rest. It released the tension. He could read Gogol or *Leather Production* or the newspaper. They all read and reread the leading article, the one with the epigraph "Delenda est Carthago!" Tigrych had written it. No one could have done it better. Another thought that came to him was of nearby Khortitsa Island, the old Cossack camp. If there had been time he would have liked to go there and bow in reverence before the ruins of Cossack freedom. Neither Vanichka nor Yashka nor Baska knew anything about the members of the Sech, about their great and just way of life, their glory and ultimate ruin, and he told them the whole story. Only recently, in Odessa, last spring, he himself had read it with delight in the history by Antonovich and Kostomarov. Freedom had always been the supreme and most rewarding value in this land. The Cossackry would tolerate no chains whether they were imposed by the state, by God, by the ataman or the family. "But you needn't make it your dream, Baska. You would never have got into the *Sech*—women were not allowed in. And if one did worm her way in, it was death to her!" How was it that in this most freedom-loving of lands a most horrible autocracy had been established, the cruellest despotism in the world? How was it that the Cossacks—the foremost rebels and knights of freedom—had been turned into the loyalest defenders of this despotism? Not all at once, of course. Centuries had passed, the wheels had turned slowly, but today here it was, firmly established. With its heavy iron fetters it had tied down the past, the future, all aspirations and hope. And no Cossack now, be he a Razin or a Pugachev, could shift it. There was only one way—to blow it up....

That evening the stock exchange cabby Nikolai Afanasyevich Sagaidachny arrived with a flask of vodka. Vanichka and

Yashka quickly disappeared, they were living in another house. It was impossible to refuse the drink altogether, but nor could he have a drink because he had to work at night. His hands would be trembling and his alertness dulled. What was he to do? To allay suspicion he drank two glasses, Baska helped in her quiet way (Nikolai Afanasyevich was tipsy already and not very observant); they started singing and the master of the house, Bovenko turned up like a bad penny at the smell of free vodka with the result that the place was a mad-house until midnight. And then Nikolai Afanasyevich wanted to stay the night. He didn't even ask, just stretched himself out on the floor, Cossack fashion. "The old woman can go to the devil...." He had quarrelled with his wife and did not want to go home. This spelled real danger. They could not lose a whole night. Any moment Presnyakov might come charging in from Simferopol and tell them it was to be tomorrow. And they still had to lay the wire from the second mine across the ravine.

To be honest, he did not believe that it could be "tomorrow". They still had about five days left. He shook Bovenko's shoulder.

"For Christ's sake, get him out of here! My wife's a young woman and she won't like having a strange man in the same room."

"Aye she's a fiery one." Bovenko nodded understandingly. "Wears you out, does she?"

"Oh, come!"

"I can see it for myself. You've melted like a candle, man, there is nothing left of you but your beard."

Somehow they shifted Sagaidachny to the other half of the house, where he was soon snoring, but Bovenko, a strange fellow with a peculiar, unsavoury interest in the intimate side of life, refused to go away. He kept beating about the bush, chuckling and winking and asking questions. So they had to do the thing properly—make up their bed together on the couch. And he even had to cuddle and smack her and take her on his knee in front of their drunken guest. Bovenko, the idiot, went on laughing.

"Dank me, the wench has worn him to a frazzle. When he came here he was a great bull of a fellow, but now look at him—just skin and bones, thin as a rake!" He belched contentedly. "You must be a real fury, girl?"

"And that's the only way to treat you, silly fools. Squeeze all the juice out of you to stop your nonsense...."

Baska answered with a sharp and ready tongue. No one would have said that this simple-looking merchant's wife, the fair-browed, broad-cheeked native of some remote northern township knew French and had read Spencer and Mill. Thoroughly drunk by now, Bovenko tried unobtrusively, so he thought, to pinch Baska in a soft place, but he was answered with a good slap, quite in the spirit of Maria Petrovna, that nearly knocked him off the bench. Andrei had to push him out of the room without more ado. He did not resist and only mumbled to himself, as if in admiration, "That's some woman! She's a real handful, she is!" They blew out the candles, got into bed and waited for about an hour and a half until nocturnal silence reigned throughout the house. They talked in whispers.

He felt the touch of the woman's hand on his own. It was always like that, the usual thing. Women were drawn to him. Baska's hair smelled of smoke from the stove. It brought back memories of what now seemed to be another life, but he had only one desire—to get everything finished that night. Surely it would not take long to lay the wire. It would not be like the first days here. Now they had experience, the knack of doing things. Baska was telling him something about herself. Her father had been a village priest in the Urzhum Uyezd. The village had the unpronounceable Votyak name of Tumyumu-chat. The girls there had their children before marriage, and the more a girl had the more people thought of her, the more desirable she was. It meant she was well built for childbearing. They believed in pixies, water sprites and goblins. In some of the forest hamlets, so her father had told her, a guest would always have the host's wife placed at his disposal. And in general it had been a weird, dark, unreal kind of life. Tumyumuchat! What a thing to happen to one, to be born in a village with such a name. Later she had studied at the Vyatka Eparchy School. Yes, it was quite surprising how many people had come to the revolution from ecclesiastical families. Lots of them! They started counting: Kolya Kibalchich, Grachevsky.... And among the Kharkov people—Butsinsky, Kuznetsov.

He thought of himself and remembered his grandfather. Yes, that was it, this dying and suffering. It was from the Gospel.

No greater love hath any man than this that he lay down his life for his friends. He pressed the woman's small hand and felt her warmth, her devotion, her readiness. Yes, besides everything else, besides these high causes, these scientifically substantiated reasons, these supreme laws, there was also the simple temptation—to lay down one's life for one's friends. And if there had been no friends.... If there were not this warm hand, pulsing with tender strength and trust, and up there in the north, if there were not that other woman, and no Janitor, no Semyon, no wise Tigrych, no Morozov with his verses, no Stepan, no Sashka, none of their little band, of whom there were so few for the country but so many for one man. Without them there would be nothing. Yes, it might be frightening, but there would be nothing. One must die for somebody's sake, for somebody. Even the teacher from Nazareth, had it not been for his disciples, would never have found the strength for his feat.

He must have pressed the woman's hand very hard.

There was a gentle tapping on the window-pane—the prearranged knock. It was a black rainy night and, when he came out on to the porch, he could not see Vanichka at three paces. The mechanic gripped his elbow and they set out. Yashka led the way, followed by Vanichka, and he brought up the rear. That night they ran into disastrous trouble. The rain had washed away the soil and laid bare the fuse wire. The damage was worst at the bottom of the ravine. In places the insulation had been broken. This was almost a catastrophe. The whole task of laying the wire would have to be started all over again! For a moment they were thrown into despair. They sat there in the rain, drained of their strength by sheer misery, and cursed in whispers. Eventually they decided to lay the wire along the edge of the ravine instead of along the bottom where the water was collecting. They worked all night and all the next night too. And then Presnyakov arrived with the news that the Emperor's train could be expected any day now. He had brought money that he had obtained from loyal supporters in the Crimea. He would be going back to Simferopol at once and they should wait for a coded telegram telling them which train to blow up. There would be two trains, each with two locomotives and they must know which one was carrying the Emperor. One would be for the Emperor's suite and the other for the Emperor himself, but the Emperor might move from one to the

other. Now there was not a day or an hour to spare. Everything must be ready. Presnyakov left. And as luck would have it, the night of the 14th of November was the wildest of all, so wild that after half an hour's struggling they realised the hopelessness of it. Again and again the hurricane threw them to the ground and there was a danger that they might break the wire. They scarcely managed to crawl back to the house. Life became nothing but feverish sleepless work. The next night was a little quieter, but now he was aware of something that had never worried him before—fear. For some reason he felt they were being shadowed, that they had been betrayed, surrounded; any minute the gendarmes might leap out at them from the darkness. Who could have betrayed them? It was nonsense, a sick delusion, but the fear—a special kind of fear, not for himself but for others—did not relax its hold.

He was afraid he might make a mistake, might take Yashka or Vanichka approaching him in the darkness for one of the watchmen and shoot him. There could be no retreating or hiding now. His nerves were strained to breaking point. The train might pass tomorrow. Tomorrow, tomorrow! On the night of the fifteenth he almost shot Yashka, when he came running too fast across the ravine. But at dawn on the sixteenth everything, at last, was done. The wires had been laid well and carefully concealed, the two ends pressed down under a stone; the sheets of zinc were in position and in its twin burrows under the track, in bronze armour, was the deity itself, the *deus ex machina* that at the crucial second was to change Russia's destiny.

That evening Andrei Korneyevich, dark-faced, bearded, with a fixed look in his sunken eyes came to them and said, "Eighteenth, in the morning."

When Grishka Goldenberg arrived in Moscow at the end of October the tunnel there was half completed. Grishka took up his quarters in the house where Hartmann and Sonechka Perovskaya were living under the assumed name of Sukhorukov. Grishka had been keen on Sonechka for some time. In January, when the attempt on Kropotkin had been in preparation and Grishka had been rushing to and fro between Kiev and Kharkov, he had often put up in Kiev at Sonechka's Ivanovskaya Street flat. It was a kind of club. His liking for Sonechka had deep and secret roots. Partly it was because she

was fair-haired and young, scarcely out of her teens, and partly because her father was a famous governor, and partly because of the hidden and unusual strength that he could feel in her. It was impossible not to feel it. Such a strange combination—this child-like quality and this strength. All this went on inside him, agonisingly deep down, and on the surface there were only jokes and tomfoolery. "Sonechka, darling, will you bestow your kisses upon me if I do something great?" "That depends, my dear David...." "Well, suppose I destroy some evil being." "Only a Goliath. I won't settle for less." But it so happened that after he had destroyed his Goliath nearly six months passed before they met and the astonishment at his exploit—there had most certainly been astonishment, general astonishment, people were thunderstruck!—had subsided and been eclipsed by other events and new goals. "What about the promised kisses?" Of course, it was all only jokes, frivolities, sweet nothings in the intervals between their serious discussions. And she joked back, but, oh my God, how dispassionately, with such unfeeling, child-like innocence! Yes, probably the rumours were true that the woman in her had not so much as slept there, let alone awakened. Sad, but true. How could she remain indifferent to such a fellow as Grishka! A hero, a fine outstanding man like him, who could drink like a Russian cabby and sing songs and was ready for any daring deed. They said she was a fanatic. But then they were all fanatics. Who was not? And yet, though he knew all this and cherished no hopes, he was drawn irresistibly to Moscow, to the place where Sonechka was at work. He told no one about this and would not admit it even to himself. But the truth was the pitiful and shameful fact that he just wanted to see Sonechka.

And see her he did. Now she was the "wife" of a minor official, Marina Semyonovna Sukhorukova, spending all day at the stove with her dustpan and dusters, or over a wash-tub. She had grown thinner, her face was drawn and her eyes unnaturally bright. They all looked tired out. The work had turned out to be hellishly difficult and mortally dangerous. They started at seven in the morning and went on till nine at night, keeping it up continuously, in shifts. They dug about fifteen yards a day. The whole tunnel would be about one thousand five hundred yards long. The ceiling was no more than three feet high so one had either to wriggle on one's

belly or crawl on all fours. They dug with spades and hauled the loose earth out on iron sheets attached to a rope. The ceiling was held up by boards and the floor too was boarded, but liquid mud oozed from below and dripped from above and it was hard to breathe; the candle often went out for lack of air. Grishka crawled enthusiastically into the shaft on the very first day and received a worse scare than he had ever known in his life before. It was as if he had been buried alive. A stuffy earthy dampness on all sides. The ceiling made cracking and rustling noises as if it was just about to fall in and suddenly there was a terrible rumble overhead that set everything shaking—the walls, the ceiling, the boards he was lying on. He had a sense of imminent destruction, it was like an earthquake. A train was passing. They had dug right up to the embankment. Grishka felt himself choking, his hands going numb; he was about to die. How on earth did the Janitor, Semyon, the student Isayev, Hartmann, manage to work here not for minutes but for hours on end? He crawled out more dead than alive. Sonechka smiled.

"Shooting's easier, isn't it? Of course, just one jump, open the door—bang! And it's all over. But here...."

He could not answer. His mouth was wide-open and he was gasping for air. Eventually, when he had got his breath back, he managed to utter, "Haven't had enough practice...."

No one seemed to realise that it was not a matter of practice, but of sheer animal fear. The whole thing might collapse at any moment. Not for nothing did the Alchemist—Hartmann—carry poison with him, so that he would not die in agony if that happened. The Janitor and Semyon took no such precautions. Nothing held any terrors for them, but the main thing was that by an act of will and total fearlessness they denied the very possibility of the tunnel's collapse. Isayev, the student, whose name was also Grishka, worked more devotedly than any of them and could stay down there longest of all. Admittedly, he had once lost consciousness. They had guessed what had happened because he had stopped pulling the iron sheet that had been emptied of earth after him and the Janitor had gone down at once and hauled the poor fellow out. It was decided he should be given a rest. From Boris, in Aleksandrovsk, they received a message to say that there was not enough wire, he needed another five hundred yards, so Isayev was sent with the wire.

Grishka did a physically hard job. He scooped the earth out of the tunnel and carried it to the bottom of the trap, then out of the trap. This was no easy task either. They poured the earth into a pantry, and later scattered it over the yard. If only the Janitor had let them have just one noggin a day to keep their spirits up! But the rule was nothing but tea and milk. And it was useless to argue with him. Yes, this was a test not everyone could pass. Kolya Morozov was dismissed because of his weak arms, Aronchik because he was lazy. However, Grishka was beginning to realise that Aronchik's sloth, Kolya's weak arms and his own *lack of practice* were the natural although, perhaps, unconscious reaction to the horror that assailed a man in the tunnel. At the beginning of November there was a thaw. The soil was soaked and a real flood occurred in the tunnel. They had to pump out the water. Then a new fear arose. In the street over the tunnel a deep puddle had formed that might cause a general collapse. The water-carrier who often passed here might easily notice the odd depression in the landscape. That night they carried out several loads of earth and smoothed out the road. Luckily the water-carrier did not go past the next day and the street was soon trampled back into its usual state. Every day some unforeseen and dangerous incident occurred. It called for resource, and Sonechka again astonished everyone with her daring and amazing cool-headedness. Now it would be the former mistress of the house turning up with a request for some jam that she had forgotten in the pantry. The pantry could not be opened because it was packed full of earth; the boards were even giving way. In true theatrical style Sonechka played the part of the forgetful housewife, and so well that the mistress of the house left with an assurance that she would call the next day when the key had been found. Next day, of course, the wretched jam would be available. On another occasion the same lady and a relative of hers came in the morning to collect some of their belongings and met Sonechka returning home with a basket full of shopping. It would have been an unforgivable risk to allow her to see the quantity of provisions in the basket, there was far too much for two people, so Sonechka thought of a pretext for not entering the house and disappeared. On yet another occasion Hartmann forgot to lock up the kitchen for the night. The trap door into the tunnel was in the kitchen and in the morning their neighbour, a garrulous old fellow came round worrying

them. He only wanted to advise them to lock up at night but his visit was agony for them because they were afraid he would notice the disorder in the kitchen and the scattered earth all over the place. But the crisis passed. The extra dynamite they were expecting from Petersburg had been delayed and they decided to send Grishka to Odessa to bring some from there. Evidently the Emperor would not travel by sea because of the bad weather. The tunnel was almost completed and now they had only to plant the explosives. At this point reinforcements arrived in the shape of Stepan Shirayev, their main technician and electrical expert. He had worked abroad, in Yablochkov's laboratory.

"What shall I bring you from Odessa, my little one?" Grishka asked Sonechka in the playfully frivolous tone that he had for some reason adopted in his dealings with her. Probably it was a kind of self-defence. Underneath it all he felt rather weak and queasy when they were talking. Sonechka asked him to bring her something sweet. What kind of something, for example? Oh, some jam. Very well, it would be jam. The Alchemist asked him in a whisper, so that the Janitor should not hear, to bring some wine. On the gloomy afternoon of November the 9th he said good-bye and left.

At Yelisavetgrad station two days later he met Kolya Kibalchich, bound for Aleksandrovsk, also with wire and fuses for Boris. They chuckled together over that. What did they want so much wire for? Were they eating it? Kibalchich had come from Odessa. He knew everything that was going on there and related that Mikhailo had probably planted the dynamite under the track by this time. This set Grishka worrying. "We must send a telegram! They must have it ready for me when I arrive, they must get it and bring it into town! I won't have any time to waste—every hour counts!" The Odessa operations were being supervised by the Purring Cat, Kolodkevich. They decided to send him the following telegram, "No need to deliver wine. My deputy coming tomorrow. Maximov." This name stood for Kolya Kibalchich.

As the train rolled towards Odessa Grishka kept a lookout for all the linesmen's huts. Somewhere along the fourteenth verst "linesman" Mikhailo and his "wife", Tanya Lebedeva, had established themselves. There was no sign of Mikhailo but he thought he caught a glimpse of Tanya near one of the huts.

And then he was in Odessa. It was warm and he was with his old friends—the Purring Cat, Savka Zlatopolsky, Mikhailo.... And there were some new ones, young, respectful people like Gerasim Romanenko in front of whom it was gratifying to boast and swagger. Mikhailo showed his displeasure at being asked to give up the dynamite and Grishka had to shout at him. On November 13th, they brought in the dynamite, three hundred rubles to be passed on to the Janitor, and also several bottles of wine and some jam. The suitcase with the dynamite in it was very heavy. But Grishka, showing off his strength, lifted it and held it out at arm's length. That same evening, the thirteenth, in a cheerful mood, because he felt entitled to consider the first half of his mission completed, he boarded the train that was to take him to Moscow.

Meanwhile the time for the Emperor to return from the Crimea was approaching. The authorities were growing more and more nervous. The various precautions included strict instructions to keep a close watch on all luggage. Scalesmen, porters, guards, all the minor railway officials were brought in to the work of surveillance on equal terms with the gendarmes. On November 14th, Polonsky, a scalesman at Yelisavetgrad Station, noted the interesting fact that a small suitcase in the luggage van from Odessa was astonishingly heavy. Polonsky reported this to the station gendarme Vasilyev, who gave orders that no luggage was to be allowed out of the van. The owner of the suitcase, a hereditary and honoured citizen of the city of Tula admitted that the suitcase was his but, in a somewhat confused answer to the question what was in it, replied that it actually belonged to a friend who lived in Kursk and the key of the suitcase had been lost. The passenger muttered all this in a strange and hurried manner—some phrases were quite incomprehensible and he kept wiping froth from his lips. He was immediately searched and the key was found. Before the suitcase could be opened, however, the passenger had vaulted over the low iron railings, and dashed along the platform, across the line and into the fields. He was chased by the gendarmes, a crowd of onlookers and several local Hussars. There was no hope of escape, but Grishka had not wanted to remain on the station premises, where a crowd was gathering and he might have been recognised by the telegraphist who had taken his telegram to Kolodkevich three days ago.

Major Palshau, an officer of the gendarmes, made the following report to the Third Section: "Finally, Yefremov was surrounded, but it was impossible to close with him and make the arrest because whenever anyone approached he would cock his revolver and aim it at that person. This constant aiming of his revolver excited and antagonised the crowd. But somehow a Private Burigin of the 7th Hussars Byelorussian Regiment succeeded in snatching the revolver out of Yefremov's hands, whereupon the crowd fell upon Yefremov in fury and began to batter him. This was stopped by the intervention of the gendarmes, but even then it took six men to overpower Yefremov, tie his hands and take him to the station. So strong was Yefremov and, in addition, angry: he even used his teeth."

During the first interrogation Grishka took a proud stand and stuck to the story that his name was Yefremov, that he was of Orthodox religion and 26 years of age. He admitted, however, that he belonged to the Russian Social-Revolutionary Party. (Dynamite! What else could he say?!) He also said that he had not fired, but had merely tried to intimidate the crowd with his revolver because he was surrounded by private persons, not gendarmes, and did not wish to cause unnecessary casualties. He firmly refused to give any evidence. Major Palshau guessed nothing of the truth—even the fact that Yefremov was Jewish, which was discovered only four days later, by chance, during the medical examination. On the morning of November 18th, when Andrei with Vanichka and Yashka were setting out for the ravine in their cart, Grishka Goldenberg was strolling up and down the narrow prison in Yelisavetgrad, whistling and drinking from a bottle of red muscatel wine (a gendarme had been given fifteen kopeks for fetching it) and for some reason there was still a proud joyful feeling in his heart. No, he would never give in, everyone would see that, and Sonechka would be astonished at his fortitude! What proof was there anyway? Dynamite did not prove anything. And he might even manage to give them the slip. It had been tricky enough to escape from exile in Archangel, but he had done it. The emptier the bottle, the lighter and more joyful grew Grishka's poor young heart. But already his fortunes were going downhill and the wheels were turning ever faster in their relentless unswerving descent. Already the Third Section had sent all provincial headquarters of the Gendar-

merie photographs of Grishka—lowered brows, tousled mane of hair, piercing half-crazy look from those cavernous eyes—and three days later Colonel Novitsky of the Kiev Gendarmerie would recognise him, show the photograph to Grishka's father, the manufacturer David Goldenberg, and the old man, pale and trembling, would say, "Yes, that's my Girshele", and all strength would abandon him; but Colonel Novitsky, on the contrary, would feel a sudden great surge of strength and start energetically issuing instructions....

The Emperor was sensitive to the weather. He was morbidly affected by abrupt changes in the wind or fluctuations of temperature, which made him feel dizzy and even slightly sick. November turned out to be a bad month; the rains began, the weather changed seven times a day—blue sky and sunshine, then fog and dampness from the sea, then a biting, bone-chilling blast from the north, from Petersburg. It was time to leave, but something made him linger. Every morning, as usual, he would rise at a quarter past eight and go out into the garden, which breathed estrangement and departure at him after the night's drenching; sometimes there were wisps of fog still clinging to the flowerbeds, it was cold, and the sea below was white. That fool Kokh was peeping at him from behind a tree. What kept him back was Katya. It was so much easier with her here. In Petersburg it was unbearable—all that talk behind one's back, the scornful glances, the enmity, the intrigue. Many hateful worries awaited him in Petersburg. For his walk he would take the left-hand path down to the sea, not too far down so that he would not have a long climb back, but far enough to be out of sight of the palace, to afford himself some solitude and a chance of concentrating his thoughts. Of course, there was always Kokh lurking somewhere in the bushes. But that was inevitable, like the mists and rain.

It occurred to him that old age resembled a well conducted siege. No matter how bravely the garrison resisted, no matter how splendid their morale, there could be only one end: on a cold winter's day Osman-Pasha would present himself at the Plevna redoubt to surrender his sword. The face of the Turk had been black with humiliation. Swathed in bandages, supported by his soldiers, he had almost had to be carried. He drew the sword from its sheath and held it out, "I did not think

I had deserved such disgrace." Noble words indeed, and they received a no less noble answer, "I return your sword. Keep it as a symbol of my admiration and respect." But the terrible thing about old age was that there would be no one to return your sword. There would be no *Alexander,* who could feel a sudden compassion and say, "I return...." It was all the result of that dreadful war: he had aged. No one had noticed the fact, or dared to notice it, but *he* knew how much more heavy, more sluggish he had become not only in body—that magnificent body of his—but in soul, which was worse. The ominous sign was a spiritual weariness and sloth in that very sphere where once he had been so joyfully indefatigable. The day before yesterday the Baroness Kampenhausen, sister-in-law of Aide-de-camp Behr, a blue-eyed nymph of about twenty-five, no more, had arrived with Girs from Petersburg and presented herself to the Emperor. He had clearly perceived complete and instant readiness. In recent years, ever since the advent of Katya, he had constantly noted the comings of various pretty young things sent by people who still would not abandon the foolish hope of *ousting* Katya with the help of one of these agents, but despite his inward exasperation and occasional outbursts of fury he had never missed the opportunity of taking what was his due. He took a malicious pleasure in punishing the intriguers in this way. Surely those people up there, in Anichkov Palace, ought to have realised by this time that Katya Dolgorukaya was no mere infatuation, not even love, but destiny itself? And yet the day before yesterday, as he inspected the new nymphet with her lovely curves, he was horrified to find that sloth and emotional indifference had remained as insuperable as ever—not for a second had he felt any desire to take his revenge on the intriguers!

And this dampness, the oppressive air, Kokh's round, piggy face hovering among the wet evergreens.... He took coffee indoors. His chest cleared and he began to breathe more easily. The day before, Katya had also been depressed, complaining of her heart, she had gone home to Biyuk-Sarai and spent the night there. She always soothed him when he spoke of his indisposition. "It's the same with everybody nowadays, Sashenka, it's the weather. I feel very weak myself. And yet I am thirty years younger than you!"

These simple words reassured him. After coffee he worked, read dispatches, the latest telegrams and, in accordance with

his usual morning routine, made an entry in his diary about the previous day. These elegant gilt-edged notebooks, specially printed by Brockhaus, with their engravings and fund of useful information, necessary ranks and names, had appeared in the world thanks to Adlerberg, who had been extremely persistent about keeping up these daily notes, "Your Majesty, every word you utter is a precious fragment of history. If only you would allow yourself one small effort every morning...." "Then give me a book that I would enjoy writing in. That would make all the difference." And true enough, those notebooks in their dark-green leather, gold-embossed bindings turned out to be so attractive that he had taken to keeping them always on the desk in front of him. In minute handwriting—so that no one but himself could read it—he noted the date, November 12th, Monday; "Rs. 8 1/4. Walked, damp, warm, but fine driz. all day. Coffee with K. in room. (Yesterday it was Katenka and coffee together!) Worked. 11 a.m. Milyutina and Adler. Walked, lunch. Dinner at 7. Bed 1 1/4."

At noon Girs and Adlerberg came in to report. The day of departure was to be Saturday. Previously it had been planned for Wednesday or Thursday but on Thursday, as Girs informed them, the trial of the political offenders Mirsky, Tarkhov and others would begin at the military-district court in Petersburg. This was the Mirsky who had attacked Drenteln. Probably they were the last of all that riffraff, the scrapings from the bottom of the barrel, so the reaction in certain circles was likely to be all the more unexpected. The lawyer Olkhin, that liberal louse, was on trial along with the overt criminals. And quite right too—he thoroughly deserved it after all the noise and fuss he had been making. No, he would rather not arrive in Petersburg during the trial, but this was a private consideration that the State Secretary and Minister at Court were not obliged to know. The trial was due to end on the 17th, on Saturday. So on Saturday he would leave. How delightful it would be to come home to a clean Petersburg, cleared of all its filth! Firm measures had yielded notably good results. Particularly effective had been the August decree by which any person charged with a political offence could be tried without preliminary investigation, found guilty without the evidence of witnesses and condemned to death without right of appeal. The shooting and stabbing gentlemen had put their tails between their legs after that. Nothing had

been heard of their tricks all autumn. But the good news was, as usual, followed by the unpleasant. In October there had been disturbances among the peasants in Byelorussia and the Yekaterinburg Uyezd. The value of the ruble was still falling in Europe. The decline had begun during the war and had persisted despite all efforts. He was informed of Saltykov's infuriated remark that had swept St. Petersburg, "We may think ourselves lucky while we can get half price for the ruble in Europe, but what about when all we shall get for a ruble in Europe will be a punch in the face?"

Such phrases left him in a state of apprehensive astonishment. And these people talked of having a constitution! What would they write and say *then*? Such wicked ways and wicked talk would overwhelm society. And the first to be swallowed up would be those who now showed most concern for representative government and freedom of the press—Alexander Ageyevich, for example, he would be the first to get a punch in the face for the instability of the ruble! Not in Europe though, but at home, by his own financiers and truth-lovers. The Emperor expressed this interesting thought. Then Girs presented him with the item he had promised for so long—since his days as envoy in Stockholm. At last one of Girs's agents had been able to purchase the document from the heirs of Doctor Ernst. It had cost a great deal of money.

Having dismissed his courtiers, he plunged eagerly into reading it.

THE ELIXIR OF LONG LIFE
SWEDEN

"This prescription was found among the papers of Doctor Ernst in Sweden, who died in 1873. He lived to the age of 104 and was killed accidentally when he fell from his horse. The secret had been kept in the family for several centuries. His grandfather died at the age of 103, his mother lived to be 109, his father 102. They attained their great age by taking the above-named elixir every day, morning and evening, in doses of seven or eight drops in double the quantity of red wine, tea, beef-tea or diluted tepid brine. The prescription is as follows:

7 ozs best aloes

1/8 oz white santonica

1/8 oz gentian or mustard root

1/8 oz best saffron

1/8 oz powdered rhubarb

1/8 oz white torchwood that grows on trees

1/8 oz real Venetian theriac

1/8 oz Russian castoreum

"All this must be pounded in a mortar or crushed, then put through a fine sieve with all possible care, then poured into a thick glass bottle. The bottle should then be filled with freshly distilled vodka or, better still, vodka distilled from French wine, and tightly covered with a bladder or wet parchment. When this is dry it should be pricked with a pin so that the bottle does not burst from the exhaust gases. Place the bottle in the shade and leave for nine days. The fluid should then be poured off and another quart of the same added, which should be shaken night and morning...."

Several more pages described the elixir's beneficial properties, but there was no time to read them now; he was too eager to go and discuss his acquisition with Katya. He set off for Biyuk-Sarai on Concord, one of the stallions presented to him by Sultan Abdul-Gamid. His escort was, as usual, only one Cossack. On the balcony of the villa—by midday the sky had cleared and it had suddenly turned warm—he first played with the children, with Gogo and Olenka, but the little girl chose to be naughty and Katya, saying that she must be ill, took her away. Then they read the "Elixir" aloud to each other. Gogo listened with extraordinary attention. An astonishing child! How could he have any understanding of the desire for longevity, for not dying, for remaining as long as possible on this earth—even mature adults did not always understand the full significance of this question—but the boy sat there listening without a single interruption. Only the

appearance of his French tutor to take him to his lessons compelled the boy to stop listening and leave with obvious reluctance.

When he had gone, Katya burst into tears. There were many reasons that could have led to her tears, so he asked no questions. As the day of his departure had approached Katya became more and more inclined to weep. Their very best days had been here, in Biyuk-Sarai. Even at the Livadia Palace where there could have been happiness and solitude—the Empress had spent the summer in Kissingen, and then in Cannes, gravely ill—even there it had not been so good as in this small house on the flower-bedecked veranda overlooking the sea.

What use was this elixir, this long life, if one could never be really happy? He soothed her, made promises, tried to explain. "At the very first opportunity...." But she had been listening to these promises for fourteen years! Soon she would be an old woman, she was sick of it all, she would rather die. But these old German women, they were strong as cart-horses, they would outlive anyone. Yes, she would rather die, she did not need any elixir of long life because she could not live without hope and she had no hope left. In her despair she uttered remarks of unprecedented impudence, but he ignored and forgave them. Five years ago, when Olga had been born, he had after some hesitation issued a secret decree legitimising the two unfortunate children: "We hereby grant to the juveniles Georgy Aleksandrovich and Olga Aleksandrovna Yuryevsky those rights that belong to the nobility and elevate them to princely rank with the title of 'most honourable' ". Through her father, Prince Dolgoruky, Katya was among the descendants of Rurik, and one of her greatest ancestors had been Prince Yuri, the founder of Moscow. The decree was given to General Ryleyev for safekeeping as a matter of the greatest secrecy. Then Katya had been happy, but now she said she wanted to die.

No woman except Katya dared weep in his presence, although he must have caused suffering to many. Even the Empress, who had suffered more than the others, was too proud to show it. Katya's tears sometimes had a depressing effect. He would grow irritable and somehow weak in spirit, but now for some reason he was calm, aware of a secret joy. Suddenly the sky had cleared. In an hour, however, the wind

again brought mist and rain and it grew colder. But Katya by this time was quite composed. She easily forgot her tears. It was one of the splendid qualities of her almost child-like soul. By a kind word or caress he could console her in any disappointment. Now she was overjoyed that his departure had been fixed for Saturday—two days later than expected.

"I implore you to be careful on the journey! Don't get out at the stations as you are so fond of doing. Remember that your best elixir of long life is caution. You are such a reckless person...."

"You may rest assured on my account. Did I never tell you about the Paris fortune-teller? In Paris, in 'sixty-seven.... Twelve years ago, it seems incredible! Do you remember the gate at the corner of the Rue Gabrielle and the Avenue Marigni? Well this Parisian fortune-teller, an old Gypsy woman, predicted that I should survive seven attempts on my life."

"Do not speak of such terrible things."

"Why not? Let us rejoice!" he laughed at the sight of Katya's sudden pallor. "Such a splendid vista of life before me, another four attempts in reserve...."

He remembered. The Babigon pavilion in Peterhof, the hot July day, the little seventeen-year-old Katya, her chilled hands, his own strange excitement, and in spring—that nightmare of the Karakozov attempt. And after that, Paris, the Palais de l'Elysée. She had entered by the side-gate from the rue Gabrielle, they hadn't seen each other for six months, and suddenly their simple happiness was shattered by the shouts of those dreadful people *"Vive la Pologne!"* and the shots fired by the Pole Berezowski, when he and Napoleon III were driving back from Longchamps in the same carriage. Why did they want to take his life? And at such a moment, when he loved everyone in the world, because love for one woman is love for everybody, all mankind. Yes, she had been at his side in moments of tragedy, and she alone—the only person—could relieve the strain on his tortured nerves. And this April, after the attempt by that degenerate Solovyov, when he had been assailed by such mortal, mind-destroying misery and had not known what to do with himself, how to escape, he had suddenly realised that the only salvation was to be had from her, in her and with her. He had settled all urgent affairs,

appointed governors-general, empowered them to act for him, and dashed off to Livadia, to Biyuk-Sarai....

On Saturday, the 17th, at half past two in the afternoon the Emperor set out by coach for Simferopol. It rained all the way. They arrived in pitch darkness, at about eleven at night, and immediately boarded the train for Moscow. The next day he received some telegrams. His son Alexander, who had recently returned from a tour of Germany, was suffering from erysipelas of the leg. The Empress gave little news of herself, but it was clear that there had been no improvement. He stared out of the window at the snowless steppeland stretching away, damp and dark, into the distance. An occasional hut showed up on the black expanse, the wide curve of the Dnieper gleamed on the horizon.

It was cold. Below zero probably. They drove out in the cart at about ten in the morning. During the night his brain had conjured with a thousand thoughts, the impatience had been unbearable, he had longed to leap from his bed and dash out at dawn; but to leave before ten would have been pointless and dangerous. Yashka and Vanichka had spent the night with him in the cottage and had slept soundly till morning, and Baska had left the day before. They drew up on the track above the ravine. It was grey all round, and blowing hard. The gusts carried but a sprinkling of rain, but it was raining hard in the distance, where the horizon was draped with swaying dark-grey curtains. Vanichka ran off with a spade to check the wire. Yashka, as the driver, walked round the cart, inspecting and tapping, and then began tinkering with one of the wheels, hammering at the cotter as though the wheel had to be taken off.

The train was due in less than half an hour.

Andrei remained sitting in the cart. At his feet lay the Rühmkorff coil, covered with a piece of sackcloth. He suddenly felt utterly and completely calm. In a moment the train would appear, come nearer and, just when the carriages were racing past before his eyes, he would join the wires—there they were, the two ends under that stone—and it would all be over. The thing that had cost so many lives, so much spiritual energy, effort and risk. How simple! He would join two thin strands of copper wire and that would be it. In a few minutes from now

he would kill. And not only an elderly, bewhiskered gentleman, but everyone who was with him, the old generals, government ministers, Cossacks, physicians-in-ordinary, cooks, servants, the tsar's mistress, his children. The death of one man, even if it meant the death of fifteen, twenty-eight, forty-three others, was of no importance when it was a matter of life or death for the people. After all, the man who joined those wires would be going to his death like all the others. At that very minute or perhaps ten minutes later. Yes, only by death could this life be put right. And only death, the most just of all judgements established by nature, could blast out the accumulated evil and untruth that was everywhere. For, by God, what was this all about? About justice, and nothing else. Give us a just world, just courts, just distribution of everything. The people can endure any hardship, but they will not endure eternal injustice. That is the worst kind of robbery. What have you done, what kind of a hash have you made of the world, if a person like Andrei Zhelyabov, a peasant's son, a student, a peaceable man, who loves to read Lermontov and *Taras Bulba*, is in a few minutes from now going to kill?

Meanwhile Vanichka Okladsky was running and slithering down the wet slope of the ravine. Yes, the wire was securely laid and undamaged. But a few paces from the embankment he suddenly stopped and thought: why am I hurrying? And then a strange thing happened to him. His heart began to thump wildly and his feet would take him no further. It was the kind of thing that happened in dreams. His legs just wouldn't move and would not support him; he wanted to drop down or at least squat on the ground. With perfect clarity he suddenly pictured what was about to happen: the thunder of the explosion, the shriek of torn metal, the falling carriages, the screams of the people inside, many people, mad with fear. And the three of them here with their cart. Where could they run, where could they hide in the bare steppes? Never had Okladsky experienced such a sudden onslaught of terror. He began to shake, he doubled up shivering, as if he were being rammed into the earth; he could not take another step further, either forward to the embankment or back to the cart. But why? What is it all for? His trembling legless body, bloodied, breathing its last, screamed frantically, soundlessly, as in a dream: I'm younger than any of you! I'm only twenty, they call me Vanichka, because they all like me and are kind to me and wish me well!

How can they kill me? I'm Vanichka! I was found in the street and brought up by Doctor Ivanovsky. I liked sweets with candied peel fillings that cost twenty kopeks a pound. I would fetch and carry, take messages, mend things, cart things, I never refused because I'm a worker and I 've got a fine pair of hands, and you want to kill me. But they told you, Georges Plekhanov, Rodionych, Verochka Zasulich, they all told you that you're wrong, didn't they? Then why are you doing wrong, you villains? First you've got to get the people, the working people, behind you, you've got to have strikes, rebellions. *Society must be prepared!* Suppose I slip across the track and crouch on the other side, then say I don't know anything or anyone, they won't tell, they're doomed anyway, but I'm only young yet. Yes, you've been told, you damned obstinate devils: terror can only do harm, it destroys people, you must give it up, must give it up, *it's no good to anyone*!

And shouting all this with a desperate strength, although inaudibly, he did nevertheless walk to the embankment, right up to one of the mines, and drove the cutting edge of the spade into the ground, into the wire, and then smoothed it over again and stamped it down and ran back to the cart. The wire was well laid everywhere and beautifully hidden under the ground. And this was what he told "Boris". But what he had done filled him with a sense of freedom and enormous relief. Very soon—for some reason sooner than they had expected—the train appeared.

Okladsky shouted gaily, "Fire away!"

Andrei joined the wires. A second passed, another, a third. No explosion. The train rushed by.

For a time they sat in depressed silence, then they began to discuss what had happened. Yashka and Vanichka argued heatedly, swearing and shouting, but these explanations seemed a waste of time to Andrei. It was just a colossal failure and he had no energy left for explaining.

All he said was, "Don't lose heart, lads. If it didn't work here, it'll work somewhere else."

He wanted to tell them about Moscow, just to cheer them up, but refrained. Meanwhile Vanichka was darting to and fro between the embankment and the cart, switching on and off, checking the battery, the coil, but nothing was clear. Andrei must have fumbled the wires. He remembered the lessons in mining he had taken from the Odessa sailors in spring. They

had been stunning fish with gun-cotton charges, and one day, when he had been almost knocked out by an explosion, someone—Pimen Semenyuta, probably—had said, "Keep away from the practical side. With your nerves and lack of technical ability...."

But there was one rule of life that Andrei had mastered—never to upset himself over any failure or misfortune for more than three days. Having sold the horse, cart and furniture and told Bovenko that they probably would not be able to set up their tannery before winter and there would be no point in staying here with nothing to do, he left the wretched little town powdered with its first snow; it was November 23rd. Vanichka got stuck in Kharkov and Andrei went off to Petersburg. From the newspapers he had learned that on November 19th near Moscow the royal train had been blown up, but this too had been a failure; it was the "escort train" with the tsar's luggage and secretarial personnel that had been derailed, and the train carrying Alexander had passed on safely to Moscow. Why this had happened it was impossible to tell from the papers. What a run of bad luck! Solovyov's misses, the fiasco at Aleksandrovsk and the enormous but pointless explosion near Moscow. Again the newspapers were cackling over the miraculous escape. But despite the failures, something had been kindled—the general astonishment of the public and fear on the part of the authorities.

In Petersburg it was winter. At dawn in the little house in Nikolayev Street, when the stoves had burnt out, it was very cold and the janitors scraping snow off the pavement outside drove away all sleep. The women sat up by candlelight till midnight sticking and addressing envelopes to be sent out all over Russia with the proclamation on the explosion of November 19th. "Alexander I"—Sasha Kvyatkovsky—had obtained the directories of various cities and they simply chose addresses at random. The work proceeded with feverish haste. Andrei liked the proclamation. A curt, business-like message "From the Executive Committee".

It was the first thing he had read on his arrival. They had printed it only the day before.

"On November 19th of this year, near Moscow, on the

Moscow-Kursk Railway, by decree of the Executive Committee an attempt was made on the life of Alexander II by means of blowing up the royal train. The attempt was unsuccessful. The reasons for the mistake and failure cannot conveniently be published at present.

"We are confident that our agents and our whole party will not be discouraged by the failure, but will draw from the present case only fresh experience, a lesson in circumspection, and at the same time a new confidence in their strength and the possibility of successful struggle.

"Appealing to all honest Russian citizens who cherish freedom and hold sacred the people's will and interests, we once again publicly assert that Alexander II is the personification of a hypocritical, cravenly bloodthirsty and all-corrupting despotism.... There is not a village that cannot count several martyrs sent to Siberia for defending the public interest, for protest against government bullying and the kulaks. From among the intelligentsia tens of thousands wend their way in an endless chain to exile, to Siberia and penal servitude exclusively for serving the people, for the spirit of freedom, for a higher standard of civil development. This disastrous process of extermination of all independent elements in society is being simplified to the final point, the scaffold. Alexander II is the chief representative of the usurpation of popular rule, the main pillar of reaction, the person who is chiefly to blame for the judicial murders; fourteen executions rest on his conscience, the hundreds of people tortured to death and the thousands now suffering cry out for revenge. He deserves the death penalty for all the blood he has shed, for all the torments he has caused.

"He deserves the death penalty. But we are not concerned with him alone. Our aim is the *people's freedom,* the *people's good.* Our task is to *free the people and make them the supreme arbiter of their destinies.* If Alexander II realised what terrible evil he is inflicting on Russia, how unjust and criminal is the oppression he has created, and if he abdicated his authority in favour of a Constituent Assembly of All the People, freely elected by universal suffrage and furnished with the mandate of the electors—only then would we leave Alexander II in peace and forgive him his crimes.

"But until then—struggle! Implacable struggle!—to the very last drop of blood.... We appeal to all Russian citizens....

We need general support. We demand and expect it from Russia.

St. Petersburg, November 22, 1879.
Petersburg Free Press."

This splendidly composed (Lev had written it, it was his style!) and instantly printed proclamation, which was already winging its way around Russia, put new heart into a man; one could draw strength even from defeat. And that strength would multiply. The press was working, the message of freedom was sounding forth, and this meant that the party was growing stronger, it was alive! Such were Andrei's thoughts on the first day of his arrival in the capital, in Maria Nikolayevna's small flat, where he met his friends. But even so, a hidden bitterness, and confusion could be sensed in everything. They did trivial things like sticking envelopes overzealously, they rejoiced without cause, discussed matters of no importance. One evening Sonya suddenly appeared. Thin, unsmiling, she looked at him estrangedly, as if he did not belong here. And perhaps an hour passed, they drank their tea, someone was about to leave and Sonya went out into the corridor to see him off. Andrei followed her and Sonya asked with quiet reproach in her voice, "What happened at your place?"

He shrugged.

"And at yours?"

She could give no real explanation. For some reason they had received information that the tsar's train would be second and she had given Stepan the signal. He had made the circuit, the track had blown up in front of the second train and the first had got by. Luckily there were no casualties, no innocent victims—that would have been too awful. Apparently the transfer had taken place at Kharkov and they had not found out about it in time. Yes, that was the whole trouble. They never got to know these things in time, their schemes were only half worked out, they didn't pay attention to details. What had happened at Aleksandrovsk? Some piffling little thing, something botched, and the result was failure. They were still just a study circle, not a party. They were ruined by amateurishness, romanticism. The thing the Janitor wanted to establish—centralisation and secrecy—was still their weak spot.

Andrei grew angry with himself as he spoke. They were his true thoughts, and agonising ones at that but, expressed in

words, they sounded didactic and overbearing and, at the same time, as if he were making excuses. It all came from a sense of guilt. He couldn't suppress it. And this sense of guilt came from his own damned petty vanity. Why should the failure of others strike him as something possible and admissible while his own seemed the most unbearable disgrace, a catastrophe. Of course, it was all boiling and burning inside him, while outwardly he adopted this attitude of complete calm, this didactic tone. But it was such a torment to think that there had been no explosion! Six weeks' work—and what work!—all for *nothing*. Sonya understood and looked at him sympathetically, with a kind of sorrowful mockery.

"No, Boris, oh no! We have only one trouble really. There aren't enough of us."

Three days later the Janitor arrived from Moscow. At last they were together again. Two equally great failures, two deluded atamans. Each had missed his chance. And yet Andrei, of course, felt that he was far more to blame. He just couldn't help feeling that way. The Janitor, as usual, astonished him with his coolness and efficiency. After listening to Andrei's story, he asked at once what they had done with the unused mines. And what about the wire? and the coil? The auger? Then he said a commission would have to be set up to inquire into the causes of the Aleksandrovsk failure. What a man! He ought to have been a secretary of state. No one else could manage things so brilliantly, take such clear and instant decisions. For some reason Andrei felt relieved. A commission would be fine. They need only wait for their chief technician Stepan Shirayev and he would soon appear.

But within a few days an event occurred that eclipsed their recent failures: the sudden arrest of Kvyatkovsky and Zhenya Figner, Vera's sister, who had been living with him in the same flat. How had this disaster occurred? Alexander was an exceptionally careful person. He had been in charge of a very important scheme—perhaps the most important the People's Will had ever undertaken—a scheme connected with the Winter Palace, which demanded complete secrecy, supersecrecy. He had abandoned all other business, all the run-of-the-mill revolutionary matters that the members of the People's Will were constantly engaged in, and there had been nothing that would have given him away. There had been no alarming news from the Winter Palace, so all was quiet on the main front. Of

course Zhenya might have slipped up somewhere, she hadn't much experience and had only come to Petersburg recently. The whole situation was vague. And extremely ominous. The ominous thing was not so much the fact that the Committee had suffered its first loss, or that one of their best and bravest men had been lost to the struggle, but that the supersecret was now under threat. It was also annoying that they had lost a splendid flat in Leshtukov Street. A very convenient place, where so many meetings, conferences and just ordinary friendly gatherings had been held. The same day another two—Morozov and Olya Lyubatovich—were nearly lost. In the morning Perovskaya had come rushing round to their flat in Znamenskaya Street to tell them that there was information (from a party agent serving in the Third Section) that Kvyatkovsky's flat was to be searched. Perhaps it had been already. And the things there were in that flat! He had to be warned. Morozov dashed off to Nikolayevskaya Street—close by, just across the Nevsky—to Maria Nikolayevna Oshanina. She had never been implicated in any illegal activity and had a perfectly clean record. She could be sent to Leshtukov Street. Sonya and Olya waited in a fever of anxiety. The Sparrow was a long time returning. Olya Lyubatovich, who had recently become his wife, was well aware of the Sparrow's remarkable courage, but it was coupled with a certain frivolity and absent-mindedness. The suspense was too much for her and she went to Kvyatkovsky's flat herself. She scanned the house from the yard. There seemed to be no safety sign in the window, but the pane was frosted over, so she decided to risk going up. The door was opened quickly in answer to her ring—by a burly policeman. "Oh, I must have made a mistake? I was told a dressmaker lived here.... " "Yes, that's right. Please, come in!" the policeman urged her. Escape was impossible. She went in. The flat was upside down. Papers, newspapers, bits of wire, metal objects that Olya had never seen here before were all over the place. Any arrest started an avalanche, a landslide, one stone pushing another, then another, then the whole lot came crashing down—in the Swiss Alps once, when Olya had been a student at Zurich University.... She recalled all this later, in the evening, when the danger had passed and they sat laughing and joking about it together. But while she was in the flat she had begun to snivel like a highly strung young lady and said weepingly that her husband would be cross with her. At

length the policeman took her to the station. As they were going downstairs they met Maria Nikolayevna. Olya gave her a silent look. She understood and went up to the next floor. At the police station Olya became quite confused and stupid, and in a flood of tears refused to reveal her address (out of fear of her jealous husband). She was playing for time so that Morozov would hear of her arrest from Maria Nikolayevna and clear the flat. In the evening some seven hours later she gave the name of the street and the house number and was escorted home by the district police officer. To Olya's astonishment the door was opened by Morozov. The flat was as clean as a new pin. The officer nevertheless placed the couple, who acted a domestic quarrel scene in the Ostrovsky spirit, under house arrest until further inquiries had been made, and stationed a policeman at the door, but they invited the policeman in out of the cold to have some tea in the kitchen, and meanwhile husband and wife, slipping on the first thing they could find, something summery, as it happened, slipped out by the back door.

All this was recounted that night at Maria Nikolayevna's flat. Andrei was there. Two had escaped and two were there, in custody. So the jollity caused by the Sparrow and Olya's story was not very joyful. Everyone would have to be careful now. The Sparrow and Olya would have to go into hiding and not show themselves for several days. "Take to the bulrushes," as the Janitor liked to say. The best place would be the secret printing press. That was in Sapyorny Street, and there they were sent.

There was no time even to think of investigating the Aleksandrovsk failure. Besides, Andrei was put in charge of the scheme that had been run by Kvyatkovsky. He was to be the contact between the Committee and the person who had penetrated the Winter Palace.

At last, on December 1st, Stepan Shirayev arrived. His wife Anya Dolgorukova, or "Nina", as Stepan called her, had just given him a son and was still in the nursing home. Stepan went there at once and was not heard of for two days. No one would have thought that Stepan, that flint-hard nihilist, brought up on Chernyshevsky (when he had returned from Europe a year ago he had for some time actually pretended like the hero of the novel to be an Englishman, a certain Mr. Morrison!) would turn out to be such an enthusiastic parent and husband.

He could not be reached on the 1st or 2nd. Andrei looked everywhere for him. Stepan was badly needed.

They had met in summer. Andrei had sensed in Stepan the same unbending firmness that distinguished them all; and physically Stepan was a match for the Janitor, Semyon, or any of the others. And there was something else: an understanding kindness, a fineness of soul. He spoke English and French as well as any of the gentry, but in fact he was from peasant stock—his mother was a priest's daughter, and his father, like Andrei's, either an estate manager or a land surveyor. The Janitor's father was a surveyor too. They were all children of surveyors. Their fathers had driven back and forth across the steppes, measuring and remeasuring this land, boundless and disordered....

The three of them—Andrei, the Janitor and Stepan—got together late in the evening on December 3rd in the furnished rooms in Goncharnaya Street that Stepan was renting in the name of Smirnitsky. Andrei told them about the Aleksandrovsk affair and drew a diagram. But he could not explain any further technical details; only Vanichka knew them. They decided to wait for Vanichka, then meet again. For some reason Vanichka had got stuck in Kharkov. Never mind, it could wait. It all belonged to history now anyway. Outside the night was cold and blustering and snow was falling heavily. Some merchants were enjoying themselves in the next apartment. They were dancing and making a lot of noise, and the servants went running back and forth past the door, tirelessly fetching and carrying. Later they brought in some women and the sound of their laughter and singing was heard.

The three sat round the table on which there was a samovar and a few snacks. The Janitor told his news. It was now known for sure that in Alexander's flat there had been three unassembled mines and about twenty pounds of magnesian dynamite. There had also been plenty of papers, proclamations, galley proofs and copies of the newspaper the *People's Will.* But the main trouble was the mines. There would be no getting away from that. How had it happened? The general outline would seem to be something like this. Zhenya Figner had given a copy of the *People's Will* to a girl student of her acquaintance, the student had shown it to an acquaintance of hers, and she had shown it to her boy-friend, who had turned out to be a rotten fellow and reported it do the police. That wouldn't

have mattered, that kind of thing happened, you could never be sure, but the mistake for which there was no excuse was that Zhenya had told this student the assumed name that she was living under—Poberezhskaya. One should never do such a thing! That was an elementary rule of conspiracy. Even a babe-in-arms would have known that had to be kept secret; otherwise they would find you through the directory in two ticks.

As usual the Janitor introduced a didactic note to his story. Andrei asked how they knew that this was what had happened. Zhenya had managed to pass a message. Of course, she was in despair, shattered. But what was the use of sobbing and crying now? She ought to have realised at the time. It was all up with Alexander, that was for sure.

Stepan listened frowning and tugging at his beard.

"I'm sorry for him and for Zhenya," he said after a silence. "You know, friends, I'll tell you honestly, I've never been afraid of being killed. But when I thought of it just now, it made my flesh creep. I won't, I mustn't, I haven't the right! How will she manage without me, with a little boy to look after?"

Andrei thought, what about himself? Andryushka was seven by now. There they were, the boy, the woman he had loved, and who had loved him, his own kin abandoned for ever. Had that been easy? But it had to be like that, there was no other way. He straightened up angrily.

"Are you a special case, or what?"

"Why?"

"Haven't we got families ourselves? Haven't I a son? And the Janitor here? What about his old folk in Putivl...."

The Janitor said, "I think it's even more painful for us to live than to die. We have more in our family. And not just relatives, much closer than that, for life and for death. And when you lose—we've lost Valerian, and Lizogub, and now Sasha—it's like tearing out your own flesh. They're our own flesh and blood...."

There was a knock at the door. Stepan went to open it. A voice, evidently that of their neighbour, one of the revellers, boomed through the narrow crack—Stepan had jammed his foot against the door to stop it being opened any wider.

"Your honour, allow me to offer my hospitality. We shall be most obliged..." the voice was slurred but very insistent. It

seemed to be inviting them to drink. Stepan refused. The merchant burbled on persistently, dropping his voice to a whisper but still pleading. Stepan put all his weight against the door and finally managed to close it. On the other side the merchant barked roughly, "Fedka, bring another dozen! Move yourself!"

More running back and forth, the women were screaming with laughter, something fell and there was a sound of breaking glass. The guests poured into the corridor. Tipsy male voices began to sing or shout in chorus, it wasn't clear which.

Stepan locked the door. They sat for a minute or two, listening. The drunken crowd drifted back into the room, where there was still some wine left; they could only dance in the corridor. It grew a little quieter. A woman gave a piercing scream. Then there was more stamping of feet and dancing. It sounded as if a big row was about to break out. Other voices, not drunk, were heard in the corridor. Doors slammed and someone shouted at the top of his voice, "Call the police!"

Andrei gave a mocking laugh.

"They're the drunken louts we're doing all this for. It's for them...."

"Not only them," the Janitor said.

"We're clearing the way for them, the upstart devils. They'll choke everyone, us and our enemies.... They're just gathering strength at the moment, they only let themselves go in hotel rooms and taverns, but when we give them freedom? They'll turn Russia into a tavern."

"Even that will be better," said Stepan. "A tavern is better than a prison."

Time passed. Suddenly there was a tremendous battering on the door. Someone started tugging at it with such force that it shook like a leaf. Plaster sprinkled down from the ceiling. Stepan clenched his fists and went up to the door.

"I'm going to calm this fellow down."

"But do it quietly," the Janitor advised.

"We beg you humbly!" the voices were bawling on the other side of the door. "Your honour! Grant us the pleasure!" The door began to crack. There were more howls, quite incomprehensible but on an imploring note. Someone shouted through the crack between the door panels, "The ladies desire your presence."

Stepan stood pensively, not knowing how to act.

The Janitor said, "Don't open—to hell with them!"

They kept the door shut and the noise gradually abated. Once again the same voice shouted for the police. The merchants kept up their revels but not in the corridor, in their rooms, which was slightly more bearable. What fortunes were squandered, thrown away on such nonsense! And meanwhile the only free newspaper in Russia was printing acknowledgements such as these: received from an unknown person 5 rubles, from Gospodin B., 10 rubles, from a friend, 3 rubles 50 kopeks. Christian charity was not giving much away. All Russia was looking on at the battle that had begun, this desperate, unequal battle. But would anyone help? With rubles, if nothing else? They watched with interest, rejoiced, gloated or raged in private, but it was nicer to be on the sidelines. No one could eat or sleep with such a rumpus going on, but they had crept away into the woodwork, like cockroaches, relying on someone else. One was shouting, "Call the police!" What were the police needed for? They ought to take these stupid oafs and throw them downstairs. Oh, you craven creatures, you herd of slaves! It would have been hard to say who Andrei was more furious with: the bawling merchants or the "cockroaches" hiding in the woodwork.

When women's cries were heard and it sounded as if the girls were being beaten, Andrei suddenly strode towards the door. The Janitor gripped his arm.

"What's up—are you off your rocker? The police will be here any minute."

He told them that in Moscow after the attempt on the royal train people had flocked to view the scene of the explosion and the Sukhorukov house. Subscriptions were being collected for the erection of a chapel. How much had they collected so far? 153 rubles! Even *Moskovskiye Vedomosti* had written indignantly about it. But there was no reason to be indignant, they must get used to it. It was just incurable indifference—to the tsars and their killers alike. There was only one people and this was it. And it was with this indifferent, confused lot that they must fight their cause, then let them sort things out afterwards. "The people want to live," the Janitor said, "and they're afraid of death, but we mustn't be afraid of death. That's the difference between us." They sat up late into the night, discussed everything, drank all the tea, and parted in silence. The merchants had quietened down. The townspeople

were asleep. Goncharnaya Street was cold and still, in the grip of the hard winter. But the next day brought terrible news indeed. Stepan had been arrested during the night.

YET ANOTHER FORGOTTEN VOICE: A. I. SITSYANKO

Seventeen years have passed since then, but I clearly remember the day, November 22nd, 1879, a cold day with a wind and wet snow, when I was running across Nikolayevsky Gardens and I suddenly bumped into the Elder. Yes, I literally bumped into him. He stepped out unexpectedly from behind a tree. He was paler and more stooped than usual, his black beard was all over the place, and he looked ill, kind of crumpled. When he took off his glove and held out his hand to shake mine I felt how hot it was, like a sick man's. We had not seen each other for about two weeks. I knew that he had been away. Everyone had left Kharkov at the end of November and the city was quite deserted.

"Sasha, I need you," he said after a few minutes' conversation. We had, of course, been talking about the Moscow explosion that had occurred three days before. The Moscow newspapers had just reached Kharkov and everyone was talking about that bad-omened blast. "Something needs hiding. Just for a few days. See you tomorrow at noon?"

Yes, it was a question, but the tone suggested that no answer was expected; it was a demand for me to stay at home and wait. I felt the hot touch of his hand again. This time he was saying good-bye. He was sure that the words "I need you" had been enough to put me at his disposal without going into any further details. But, for God's sake, that was how it had always been! For a second I felt something like fear, but it was not fear; it was an unconscious, self-defensive *pushing away* from myself of something vague and unnecessary with which I could not agree. But could not disagree either. It had all begun long ago and had been worrying me, tormenting me ever since. The main thing I want to stress is that it was not fear. There was no fear. Although in those days I was only a raw youth of eighteen, in my last year at modern school, life had already given me a good many shocks of various kinds and I had risked much and attempted much. So, that momentary *pushing away*

was not because of fear for my own future—I had done a lot more and hidden more in my time!—but because I was in doubt and could not finally make up my mind. It was just the period, in October and November, when we were holding our meetings and all those newcomers appeared on the scene—Grishka, and that bearded fellow Boris. Now I know that he was the famous Zhelyabov, but then he was just Boris, quite an ordinary person, like a merchant or a shop assistant to look at, in his tight-fitting coat and top-boots, but amazingly eloquent, could speak for hours. And this was the period when I was on the brink. I felt I must get my position clear, take a decisive step, because I had reached the threshold but lacked the final decision. Grishka spoke more sharply and fiercely than anyone. But it so happened that he made less impression. Even though I guessed what the exploit was that he had performed. With him everything was on the surface, crackling and sparkling like a firework; the words "blood", "vengeance", "execution", "judgement" came pouring out, but it was in Zhelyabov that I felt the true strength and, to be quite honest, there was something rather frightening about it. One day he spoke to us about the human will. A man with will-power, he said, was invulnerable. By will-power you could conquer death, even nature itself, let alone such human institutions as states and governments. It amounted to the deification of the individual will. I asked him if this was not supreme egoism. He replied that, when guided by reason, the will could not be egoistic because its ultimate aim would be the good of all. After so many years I cannot recall the exact conversation, but that was the gist of it; it was rather in the spirit of certain fashionable theories, and I was particularly struck by one remark. About father. You see, what worried me most of all was my relations with my father. I was very fond of my father and sorry for him. So I asked Zhelyabov, as an older person, and one for whom I had acquired an unusual respect, what I should do if my will presented a threat to the will of the members of my own family. And not just an ordinary threat, but the threat of death. After all, there were other ways of killing besides the knife and the revolver.

Now I can see everything clearly. But then there was no clarity, only foreboding. Now I can talk about my father and all the rest of us as if they were strangers; I am taking a detached view of them. Our father was a wonderful, kind,

simple-hearted, unfortunate person. A native of the Vitebsk Province, Osip Semyonovich Sitsyanko, a Catholic, he had adopted Orthodoxy and married our Orthodox Chistian mother, who had died young, leaving the four of us: my father, two elder sisters and myself. In Kharkov my father used to teach at the University, he was a lecturer in the department of electrotherapeutics and ran his own electrotherapy clinic at home. We were a happy family. There were always plenty of young people in the house, friends of my sisters, students, my school friends. Father did his best to keep us from feeling that we were orphans, deprived of a mother's care and affection. Aunt Viktoria, father's sister, (her husband's name was Pōltshof) often came for long stays, bringing her three sons, Sashka, Vitka and Vasenka. They were all rather young, mere striplings like myself, and, of course, keen hunters, Iroquois, Mormons and Quadroons. All in all, we made lots of noise and had great fun! There was never anything better....

My father, I must admit, was not a successful man. He was a merry fellow who never had any luck. We were always short of money and he would engage in all kinds of schemes *"pour l'argent"*. I can almost hear his casually cheerful voice, "Oh, I'm just doing this *pour l'argent.*" But the *l'argent* did not materialise. One day he would be organising special lectures in the laboratory at home, for which he charged admission, the next he would set up a cheap eating-house for students, also at home. It was called "Sitsyanko's Eating-House". But both enterprises came to nothing. The clinic was not popular either. People were guarded in their attitude to the new treatment. Too often those who came were hopeless cases, but father out of sheer desperation, and also his own natural kindness and light-mindedness, undertook to cure them, which ended in embarrassing failure. With one woman he fell in love. Outwardly she seemed quite normal but there was a streak of insanity in her, just one; she grew fearful whenever the street lamps were lighted. She thought that this was the hour when she was doomed to die. And my father fell in love with this sick woman in a big way. We were quite ruthless. When we realised the danger that threatened us, we demanded that he should stop seeing her at once. We would never have tolerated any woman. As I recall this now I writhe with hatred of myself and my sisters. What spiteful, childish selfishness! But the main harm was done later. And it was I who did it. Without

wishing to. All I wanted was to rid the world of evil, of injustice.... I met Butsinsky at the beginning of 'seventy-nine. I was taking chemistry lessons from some of the students, in preparation for entering the University. Butsinsky called himself a "statist". We had a study circle that was steadily expanding. We used to read the illegal stuff, discuss socialism, dream about the future and argue. The indignation when Kropotkin ordered the Cossacks to break up a student demonstration with their whips was terrific. Father came home in a towering rage. "This is barbarity! In a civilised country!" And suddenly Kropotkin was assassinated, quite openly, in the street. No one had any clear idea of who was behind it. The mysterious Social-Revolutionary Party. Our circle may have had some fringe contact with these people but I knew nothing definite. The students were jubilant. Father was thunderstruck. "But you must agree—this is also barbarity. What a way of proving yourself right...." The arrests began. Butsynsky disappeared from Kharkov, leaving me with the printing press and a pile of banned literature.

The press was out of order. I tried to fix it. One day I forgot to lock the door of the room and my cousins discovered it by accident. They became my assistants. Then father received an anonymous letter saying that I was "spreading anti-government ideas among the people", and that there was a store of books, newspapers and proclamations in our house. It was true that I had read out a few things to the workers in my father's workshop and to the servant Nikifor. This anonymous denunciation might have been written by the student Krzhemensky, who was my cousins' tutor. God, what a lot of boyish nonsense it all was! My cousins must have blurted it all out to their tutor, and he—a boy himself not so long ago—had pestered them, and then me, out of sheer curiosity. I had been afraid to let him into the secret and this was his revenge.

Father demanded that I should destroy the books, the newspapers, everything. He was annoyed and frightened, and also outraged by Solovyov's recent attempt. "This is madness—to put all the blame on one man! How can they be such fools! And all this has to happen just when my affairs are improving, when the patients are beginning to appear and we are on the threshold of success."

He expected instant reprisals against anyone who was in any way implicated. And this was what he considered himself to be

after the anonymous letter. I was putting the books in a small trunk to take them out to our summer cottage, about seven versts from Kharkov, and just at that moment—another blunder on my part!—he came into the room and saw the printing press. His face went white. "What's this?! What horrible thing is this in our house?!" In his rage he went at it with a hammer. The press I had worried about for so many sleepless nights was destroyed in two minutes. "There! Take that!" my father roared, delivering the final crushing blows. "Mill! Spencer! Bervi—what's his name!—Flerovsky! They can all stew in hell!" He dropped the hammer and I was frightened because he clutched at his heart and nearly fell.

My sisters scolded me and also insisted on my taking everything away to the country. There were several bundles of the newspaper *Land and Freedom*, and the magazine *Forward*, and proclamations. I stuffed them all into a pail, and the type into another, smaller pail. I spent the whole summer in the country with my sisters. Father stayed in town and did not visit us once. In August, he flew into another panic and demanded the return of the books, newspapers and type so that he could burn them all with his own hands. I took them back. Not all of course. He melted down the type himself in his office stove, and burned the papers. That, he thought, had put an end to the matter. But in September we started holding meetings at Yashka Kuznetsov's, then at Mitrofan's, and sometimes with Manych, our teacher, all without father's knowledge. We lived our own lives. I was firmly convinced that the present economic and political system was thoroughly unsatisfactory, and that it was everybody's duty to try and change it. How? By action among the people. I didn't bother to go far and started on the people in the immediate vicinity—the men employed in my father's workshop, Danila the watchman, and Nikifor the servant. There was a mechanic in the shop, Vanichka, the same age as myself, from Petersburg, a smart lad. He was soon to become a celebrity, like Zhelyabov. At the trial of the sixteen in the autumn of 1880 (just a month after our own trial) this Vanichka won renown for the daring phrase: "You needn't go easy on me. If the court reduces its sentence, I'll take it as an insult." I would never have suspected such bravado from this simple uneducated lad who, if remarkable for anything, it was his eagerness to oblige his superiors, particularly such "generals" as Zhelyabov and

Kolodkevich. Many years later, during exile in Irkutsk, I heard it said that Vanichka had allowed himself some very frank admissions to the Department and thereby won fortune's favour—hard labour for life instead of the death penalty. Whether this was the real truth or mere talk, I don't know. He wasn't the only one they talked about. There was plenty of imagination and guesswork going on out there, and a few lies thrown in as well. We had nothing to do, the nights were long, and life was so deadly dull....

In the autumn, when Zhelyabov, Goldenberg, Kolodkevich, and later some other important terrorists—I've forgotten their names now—started turning up at our meetings, I realised that this crowd had not descended on us just for nothing. Not just to explain to us young, provincial free-thinkers the essence of what was happening in the Russian revolutionary movement, as Zhelyabov put it. They were here for practical purposes, not theory. And I sensed that some of us knew what was going on—the Elder, for example, or Vanichka, and another worker called Nikolai. On the whole, so I noticed, Zhelyabov had a soft spot for the workers. Was I piqued at not being let into the *whole secret*? Incidentally, I was not the only one, neither were Yasha Kuznetsov, Mitrofan Blinov, Kashintsev, Filippov, nor our youngest and most daring Granka Lyogky. Yes, of course, I was, and at the same time I was afraid and didn't want their trust. I was afraid not for myself, but for my father, for our whole family that had been through so much since mother's death. And it was then that I asked Zhelyabov, "What if the destruction of the enemy means the destruction of an innocent person of your own family?" He thought for a moment, then replied, "Are you prepared to sacrifice yourself for the sake of Russia's future?" I said that I, personally, was ready to sacrifice myself. "Well, it's the same thing. Sacrificing your near ones is sacrificing yourself. They are you." I must confess that his answer struck me as a monstrous sophism. But afterwards it occurred to me that even the Saviour Himself would have given a similar answer to such a question. It was just that I was not prepared for the unbearable. I should never have had the strength and courage to endure such pain. But to him it seemed natural—that was the frightening thing!—to make a sacrifice of something much more than himself.

In November, he disappeared from Kharkov; now I know where he went. He showed up again for a moment towards the

end of the month, the day before I met the Elder. I am almost sure that the idea of giving me all the paraphernalia of the unsuccessful Aleksandrovsk attempt came not from Zhelyabov, but from Vanichka Okladsky. Because Vanichka had worked at my father's place. He knew all about the half-built annexe and he knew me, and for that very reason—knowing how afraid I was of letting my father down—he would not have proposed the idea himself, realising I would refuse him, but had passed on the idea to the Elder. Pyotr Abramovich Tellalov, the Elder, was in those days the leader of our whole underground group. Everyone respected him. By that time I had come round to the idea of not opposing terror, but not engaging in it either. I would just carry on in my own way, propagandising socialism among the workers. The Elder began by hinting that an attack like the Moscow one had been launched somewhere in the south, too, but had failed. It struck me at the time that there was probably a connection between this hint and the request for me to hide something.

I asked, "What exactly do you want me to hide?"

"Some daggers they've sent from Poltava. An earth auger and a battery and some other rubbish...."

He spoke casually, looking at me with an air of surprise. It seemed strange to him that I should even have second thoughts. But the thing I had been thinking about was what would happen to my poor father if all this suddenly came to light.

"What's the matter?" the Elder asked. "Are you worried about something? There's no better place in the whole city than that half-built annexe of yours."

"Yes, of course," I said.

"So tomorrow, at noon, you'll be expecting me?"

"Yes," I said.

I could not utter the word "no", although my whole inner self, gripped with foreboding, was saying: no, no, no! The next day he brought the auger, battery, Rühmkorff coil, daggers, revolvers and wire all wrapped up in rags. I hid some in the stove of the annexe and some in the pantry. Three days later a Captain of the Gendarmes appeared with a search warrant. Apparently a little boy, the son of a cobbler from Yakubovich's shop on the ground floor of our house, had come across something in the annexe and told his father. Or perhaps the servant Nikifor or someone else had given it away. Nikifor

was a mysterious person, devoted to my father but a sick man, prone to hysterics, and he also suffered from some secret perversion. And then there was Vanichka. A year later he bared his heart to the authorities in Petersburg. Might he not have let fall a few confidences among the Kharkov police? He had some acquaintances there, I know. Back in summer, when he was working in my father's workshop, he had been summoned in connection with the case of Kolya, also one of our employees, who had accidentally shot himself trying to repair a revolver. Acquaintanceships with the police do not always end harmlessly. Father had already attracted attention—that eating-house, the lectures at home, the meetings, the young people coming and going. They could have probed Vanichka a bit, just tickled him and left a request for him to bear in mind in future. Nothing crude or straightforward, of course, but in the most delicate way possible, with "fingers light as a dream". In Siberia we heard all about such subtle arts. God knows who tipped off the police! But it caused a landslide and our life was shattered for ever. They arrested father, me, my sisters, and all the members of our circle in turn: Yasha, Mitrofan, Granka Lyogky, Manych, Danilov. They grilled us for a whole year. At first we stood up to it bravely, then we began to talk. They even dragged our cousins into the investigation, frightened the life out of them, and they, too, made confessions of all they knew. Apparently Nikifor was very helpful in the investigation, and the old woman caretaker in the country, where I hid the type, and also the workers to whom I used to read aloud from those books. ...Seventeen years! First in the Verkholensk District, then in the Kirensky, then the Verkholensk again. Father was acquitted, but the blow was too much for him and he died soon afterwards. My sister Masha followed me to Siberia.

And eventually I came back. Yes, I survived, managed to stay alive for some reason. Now it is 1896. To me everything in Russia seems to have changed. Different houses, different hats, different writers, different newspapers. I couldn't bear living in my home town. The people there were all strangers to me, I couldn't understand what they were arguing about, what they were striving for. My former friends who have somehow managed to achieve some sort of rank and position strike me as utter philistines with whom there is absolutely nothing to talk about, and I suppose I seem to them an outlandish ne'er-

do-well. So I have moved to Voronezh. Sometimes I wonder how it would all have turned out if that day when I met the Elder in Nikolayevsky Square I had answered "no"?

Clio—72

In Voronezh, Alexander Sitsyanko joined the socialist revolutionaries, was arrested in 1897, brutally tortured by Colonel Vasilyev, who spread the false story that Sitsyanko had cracked up and was betraying his comrades. In February 1898, Alexander Sitsyanko hung himself while in solitary confinement, on the very day when his sister Maria, after repeated refusals, had been allowed to visit him; but of this he knew nothing. The gaolers planted a note in his cell warning all it might concern to be careful of Sitsyanko. Maria was soon sent away to Siberia, escaped, was caught and sent back, and died of a chill three months before the revolution of February 1917. Nearly all Alexander Sitsyanko's comrades in the trial of 1880 gave frank evidence. Mitrofan Blinov, Yakov Kuznetsov and the young athlete Yevgraf Lyogky, who tried to hang himself in prison under the strain of solitary confinement, were particularly frank. Yevgraf Lyogky was executed in Irkutsk in 1882 for killing a warder with the broken-off leg of an iron bedstead. In the record office in Pirogov Street, Moscow, there are two bulky files containing the materials of the "Case Against the Khakrov University Lecturer I. S. Sitsyanko and Others". Its yellowed, now useless scraps of paper tell the whole story of the Kharkov semi-conspirators, semi-terrorists, semi-adolescents, semi-resolute and semi-weak fighters for a better world, which began on November 27th, 1879, at four o'clock in the afternoon with the searching of the half-built annexe to Doctor Sitsyanko's house. In one of the files, immediately after Goldenberg's evidence that was largely responsible for Sitsyanko's destruction, there is an envelope marked "Enclosure". It contains samples of the wire and Rühmkorff coil found in Sitsyanko's house, wrapped in cotton wool. The wire is good strong stuff, and well insulated. It must have taken a powerful blow with a spade to cut through it. These are pieces of the wire and coil that Zhelyabov used at Aleksandrovsk. Cart, "fire away!", wire, pantry, cotton wool, envelope, folder tied with thick tape, Pirogov Street, August, a trolleybus going in the direction of the Luzhniki Stadium....

Chapter Five

After the November attack on the royal train near Moscow it became obvious to the world at large that an unprecedented duel had begun in Russia. On one side was all-powerful authority, on the other, a band of invisibles, the mysterious "people of the underground". Arrests and executions had proved of no avail. No connections could be traced. It seemed as if the people they arrested were not the ones who mattered, and those they executed were not the ringleaders. It was like the tale of the oatmeal jelly with its terrible magical power of growing bigger the more you ate of it. The camp of the Emperor, who was the target of these ranging but as yet not very accurate shots, was gripped with confusion. At one moment there would be a sense of panic-stricken incomprehension, utter ignorance of what to do or where to go to escape this menace, while the next would bring a blaze of hysterical anger. The liberal bureaucrats led by Valuyev were at daggers drawn with their sworn enemies, the advocates of the hard line of autocracy and healing by blood and iron. The former laid all the blame at the door of the latter, while the latter simply regarded their accusers as traitors. It was not a situation that could end in reconciliation.

Pobedonostsev, member of the Council of State, urged the young heir to the throne, Alexander Aleksandrovich, both orally and in writing that "all these socialists, these dagger men and others, are nothing but dogs let off the chain. They are working unconsciously not for themselves but for the Polish nest, which has worked out its plan very cleverly and may well succeed with the help of our own statesmen...." In December, at the close of this unnerving year, with the reverberations of the Moscow explosion still unabated, Pobedonostsev wrote to the young Alexander: "My heart is utterly sick of all the local people of rank and learning. It is like being in the company of a lot of half-crazy and perverted apes. From all quarters I hear only the one outworn, false and accursed word—constitution.... Everywhere among the people the idea is growing that it would be better to have a Russian revolution and all the agonies of civil strife than a constitution. The first can be dealt with promptly and order can be restored in the land, but the latter is a poison that affects the whole organism, corrupting it with a permanent lie that the Russian soul cannot accept....

The people are convinced that the government is made up of traitors who hold a weak tsar in their power. All hope rests upon You! Valuyev is the main instigator of the constitution...."

The hopes that some semblance of a constitution, of representative government, in other words, the introducing of Zemstvo delegates into the Council of State, would somehow save the day and steady the ominously shaking edifice of state with its bad harvests, famines, peasant unrest in many provinces, strikes at the factories, and discontent both among students and among writers choked by the censorship—all these hopes were fed not only by Valuyev but also by the Minister for War Milyutin, and the Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich. Plans were drafted, memorandums were written, representations were made to the tsar, but the tsar's response was always the same—he vacillated. Apart from the moments when he was seized with anger the tsar remained in a permanent state of vacillation. Such was this strange sentimental character, incapable of resolute decisions, of making history, and capable only of bowing to circumstances. He had vacillated for a long time before the peasant reform and had taken the decision only because it was forced upon him by circumstances, events, the very age itself. Again he had vacillated before the gates of Tsargrad, not knowing whether to enter the city or not and trying to shift the responsibility on to the shoulders of the Commander-in-Chief. When, in the end, he did not enter, Russia paid the price with the Berlin humiliation. And now for nearly twenty years he had been vacillating before the sphinx-like riddle of whether to consent to these timid schemes for a constitution. As a military man it seemed to him that this would entail a certain demotion. If he was now a full general, he would then be reduced to the rank of lieutenant-general. Besides, many by no means foolish people, like Prince Urusov and the government minister Makov, advised him to temporise. Why should he hurry? In the Western countries, in France, for example, a constitution had been proclaimed and the disturbances and anarchy had only increased to monstrous proportions. But, on the other hand, repressive measures alone.... In short, the tsar was vacillating and intended to go on vacillating for a long time. The essence of his vacillation lay in his incurably suspicious nature. He distrusted everyone. He had distrusted his elder son

Nikolai and after Nikolai's death had become suspicious of Alexander.

Of General Potapov, the former head of the Gendarmerie, he had once said, "I don't think I was ever kind to him. Why is he against me?" At times this eternally smouldering suspiciousness flared up with wild and ungovernable force, and on one such occasion he had actually spat in the face of his old friend Prince Vyazemsky, who when riding with him in the same carriage had irritated the tsar by his humble silence. But as the prince silently wiped from his cheek the traces of the monarch's incomprehensible anger, Alexander had suddenly flung his arms round the prince's neck, embracing him and begging his forgiveness. At first he was angry, uneasy, suspicious, and then he was ashamed and uneasy, and all this in the space of a minute. Sometimes the opposite occurred. At first he would open his arms and beg forgiveness, then spit in a person's face. Something of the kind had happened with the reforms. At first there had been a festival of official kissing, and afterwards, very soon afterwards, disillusionment and enmity. Russia would remember this tsar as a tsar with two faces and two names: Alexander the Liberator and Alexander the Hangman.

On returning to the capital after the shocking affair near Moscow, the tsar displayed not panic but irritability. Displeased that Mirsky's sentence had been commuted from the death penalty to hard labour for life, he vented his annoyance on Gurko, the Governor-General of St. Petersburg with the remark that he must have acted under the influence of "women and literary people". Any talk of a draft constitution was out of the question. But a few days passed, the tsar recovered his composure, or rather, his usual state of vacillation, and in a little while once again began to ask his brother Konstantin and Valuyev about their drafts.

But, alas, the trouble was that these glorious champions of Russian progress were vacillating no less than the Chief Vacillator! Milyutin, one of the most zealous reformers, confessed in conversation with another reformer, Abaza, that the situation could not be saved by admitting Zemstvo delegates when all Russia was in a state of siege. And at this very time the liberal leader, Valuyev, was jotting down in his own private notes: "One has a feeling that the ground is unsteady and the building is in danger of falling." At the crucial moment, during

one of the first highly secret meetings of the Special Conference, when the Grand Duke's draft constitution was being discussed, Valuyev unexpectedly declared, "I should like to know how much it matters what the representative for Tsarevokokshaisk or Kozmodemyansk has to say about any legislative proposal." Everyone was staggered by this strange leap, this sudden change of front, which they attributed to Valuyev's dislike of the tsar's brother without realising that this, too, was a manifestation of that same unconscious, uncontrollable, almost mystically powerful vacillating movement. Everyone was vacillating, they all felt their knees shaking, and even the young Alexander, that pillar of the conservative party, Pobedonostsev's hope, the heir to the throne did not, alas, set an example of firmness.

Although the people of the so-called Anichkov Palace party, the advocates of the hard line and enemies of all connivance, had gathered round the young Alexander, they found that they must rather inspire him with their own spirit, their own ideas, than draw support from him. The heir apparent had inherited his father's lack of self-reliance, for the more a man wavers the more powerfully he may be influenced. And besides, his relations with his father were complex and were becoming ever more strained as the Princess Yuryevskaya steadily took the reins of power (as yet only over the tsar!) into her own hands.

Nevertheless, all the complexities, dislikes and differences of opinion faded into insignificance this year in the face of the gathering storm and the frightening lightning flashes that came in the shape of these terrible political killings. Life was changing past redemption. Fear was becoming as much a commonplace of Petersburg as the damp climate. One had to get used to it. In April, after Solovyov's attempt, the heir to the throne wrote in his diary in his careless, backward schoolboy's hand, "Today I rode for the first time in a carriage under escort! I cannot say how sad, depressing and humiliating it was! It's simply awful to have to ride with Cossasks as if in time of war through our always quiet and peaceful Petersburg, but it can't be helped. We are living at a very bad time and if we don't do something about it strictly and in real earnest, it will be hard to put matters right for years afterwards. Father, thank goodness, has also decided to ride with an escort and now drives out with a Cossack officer on the box and two mounted Cossacks at the side."

They got used to the fear, they got used to the Cossack escorts, and eventually even to the attempts on their lives. In November, the heir to the throne noted quite briefly and in a somewhat melancholy tone: "November 22nd. Papa returned from Livadia after spending two days in Moscow, where there had been another attempt on his life and the railway was blown up under a train, but luckily not his train, but the one behind, the second train. It's simply terrible. What a delightful time to be living in!"

Another thing that made it impossible for the tsar to grant concessions, to "meet the aspirations of Russian society", was that it would look as if he had been frightened, given into the threats of these underground pygmies. That would have been quite *insupportement* for the pride of any tsar. Indeed, it would have been an affront to any man. And another point. If only they could find the ringleaders of the secret committee and render harmless the main criminals! That would offer some assurance of a decline of this pestilence and one could then, with a light heart, agree to certain concessions. It would be the same as with the abolition of serfdom—there would be at least an appearance of beneficence from above, and not of action made inevitable by the pressure of sinister forces. But as luck would have it, the *light heart* that the tsar so much desired was not to be granted him. The ringleaders remained invulnerable, the chief villains uncaptured. The assassins of Mezentsev were still at large, so was the man who had shot Kropotkin, and the secret printing press that insolently put out pamphlets and newspapers remained undiscovered. There was reliable evidence that this sink of villainy was situated in the capital, but these dolts of policemen had been striving for months in vain. Perhaps he ought to invite some more able people from England? Nor had a single person been apprehended at the scene of the Moscow explosion. If there was anything these criminals must be given credit for it was their amazing elusiveness and a perfectly bestial, fox-like cunning. The individuals that fell into the police net by chance were of no use at all. They were all small fry, easy catches. But the demon pike, would the devil take them, were still laughing silently in their secret dens.

And all of a sudden, in the niddle of December, there came wonderful news. A message from Odessa: Kropotkin's assassin, a certain Goldenberg, the son of a merchant, had fallen

into the hands of the authorities. As yet he had confessed only to an agent who had been planted in his cell. Much detailed information about the Moscow explosion had also been gathered. The investigation was being pursued with tremendous care and increasing success. At last they had found the thread in the labyrinth. On December 18th, the Odessa public prosecutor Dobrzhinsky, much praised by Totleben and, so it appeared, a man whose abilities were not to be compared with the Petersburg ditherers, came post-haste to Moscow with a bagful of most precious information obtained from Goldenberg. The tsar rejoiced cold-bloodedly. At last! Now it had begun, thank the Lord! By Christmas he was in a much better mood and it looked as if only another small success were needed for him to be able once again to return to the subject of concessions and aspirations.

Meanwhile Grishka, who at the end of November had been transferred from Yelisavetgrad to the fortress prison of Odessa, was engaged in a desperate struggle with the tsar's executioners and satraps. Totleben himself, the ruler of Odessa, had bawled and stamped his feet at Grishka. Panyutin, head of the governor's chancellery, a very fierce man, positively bursting with spite and hatred, had threatened him with a revolver and promised to have the whole Goldenberg tribe rotted to death in Siberia. Other gentlemen had also been at work on Grishka. Colonel Pershin of the Gendarmes and his assistants had threatened and intimidated him, used their fists, pulled his hair, deprived him of sleep, tormented him almost to death, but Grishka did not give in. Make Grishka talk! You haven't the guts for that, gentlemen! The man has not been born who could force Grishka to speak against his will. They had learned nothing from their interrogations except what his poor father had confirmed from protograph: yes, this was his son. Grigory Davydov Goldenberg, born in Berdichev in 1855. As for his affairs there was nothing his father could possibly know. Badly mauled but proud that his gaolers were powerless to break a true revolutionary, Grishka would return to his cell and fall on to his bunk or, if he had no strength left, on the bare floor, and here his only joy were the words of sympathy and admiration he heard from his friend, Fedka Kuritsyn. "Grishunya, how are you? Still alive? You didn't give in to the dirty swine? I've

been keeping some tea for you. Here, drink this. Oh, the swine, the villains, scoundrels, the rotten devils...."

Fedka swore in a whisper, fearing that the warders might hear. He was afraid of everything. Three years in gaol had crushed him, knocked all the spirit out of him. He had been here since 'seventy-seven in connection with the attempt on Gorinovich. Grishka had heard about him before from his Odessa comrades. Fedka had been a jolly fellow, an amateur musician, a singer, and had studied at the Kharkov Veterinary Institute, but now he was a broken man. His eyes were sunken, his voice trembled. Unable to sleep for nights on end, he would complain to Grishka, "They've finished me off. I'm going out of my mind.... I can't stand it any more.... Say a few words to me, do!" And Grishka took pity on him and talked. The gaolers passing quietly heard the conversation and banged on the door with their fists, threatening them with the punishment cell and solitary confinement because they were not allowed to talk at night, and then Grishka and Fedka would mutter in scarcely audible whispers.

Sometimes Fedka would weep, sometimes break into a kind of crazed cheerfulness and start singing—this was in the daytime, if the cell was suddenly brightened by sunshine—from various operas, and even the soprano aria from *The Oprichniks*: "Nightingale in oakwood loudly calling...." Grishka was very sorry for him. Such a wonderful voice and now it was ruined, and the man himself too. The trial of Fedka and his comrades Kostyurin, Drobyazgin, Vitka Malinka and Maidansky was approaching, it was due any day. They had already served the act of indictment. Fedka was incredibly thin and weak and the doctor had put him on hospital rations and bromide.

Fedka's only joy was talking to Grishka. After all, he had been cut off from life, from the struggle for three whole years! He knew nothing and any scraps of news would send him into fits of horror or rapture. He knew none of the details about the attempts on the tsar, about the killing of Kropotkin, or about the new terrorist party that had been formed and had gone into action with such effect.

"My God, and I've been in here all these years! My hands are tied!" Fedka would whisper in despair. "You are doing such splendid things...."

And when he learned that Grishka himself, with his own

hand, had executed that scoundrel Kropotkin, the butcher of the Kharkov students, Fedka's astonishment, joy and admiration for Grishka knew no bounds. He kept repeating how happy he was to be in the same cell as such a heroic person, how much it mattered to him and helped him, and added to his strength. So, Grishka told him about the Moscow tunnel and the planting of the mine at Aleksandrovsk; in both places Grishka had played a by no means minor part; on the contrary, he had been well to the fore. In fact, there was probably no other man in Russia who was as well acquainted with and involved in the revolutionary "kitchen" as Grishka Goldenberg. All the hottest pies had been baked with his participation. Ha-ha! If these Odessa dupes only knew what an outsize bird they had caught in their net! They would go crazy with joy. But they didn't know a thing. And no tortures would make Grishka tell them.

At the beginning of December the Odessa rebels were tried and those fine people Drobyazgin, Malinka and Maidansky were sent to the scaffold. Kostyurin's sentence was commuted to penal servitude. In view of his three years in prison Fedka was given exile. On December 7th, the three were hung. One of the warders whispered the news. Fedka's suffering was unendurable; for two days he lay with his face buried in his pillow, refusing all food and drink. Grishka grew frightened on behalf of his friend. And once again the only treatment for Fedka, his last joy, was their nocturnal conversations.

The days dragged on, Grishka's gaolers began to leave him alone. Evidently they were tired and discouraged and brought him up for interrogation less and less often. So, in the daytime he was silent, but at night he talked. Fedka was preparing to leave prison and go into exile. The prison authorities had not yet decided where, but before his exile Fedka would be sent to Kharkov, and from there on to Siberia. Grishka gave Fedka his final instructions. In Kharkov of all places Grishka had plenty of friends—houses, flats where people would be ready to help. He passed it all on to Fedka, open-heartedly, generously told him about his best, his bosom friends, whom Fedka would be able to rely on as well as on Grishka himself. "First, look up Gospozha Zaslavskaya in Podolsk Street, and tell her you're from David.... Second, you go to the Elder and tell him you had your last binge with Grishka.... Greetings to Mitrofan

Blinov, Volodya Zhebunyev and Yashka Kuznetsov, who must be tipped to deny any connection with him, Goldenberg, and not mention on any account that meeting in summer, the one a lot of people attended.... And the very warmest greetings and kisses to Sonya Perovskaya, if she had returned from Moscow to Kharkov...."

At the beginning of January, Fedka left prison. It was a sad parting and Fedka nearly broke down in tears. There was one request, from all the prisoners, that he should sing to them in farewell. And Fedka sang in a thin, high-pitched voice that was full of sorrow. Three years within these walls had been no joke, his life had been shattered and now a new one was beginning, but his comrades would be left behind.

Nightingale in oakwood loudly calling,
Maiden in her chamber with sad tears falling...

Grishka listened, wringing his fingers. Fedka bent his tear-wet face towards him. "Grishunya, I beg you. Don't give in!" Grishka nodded. "Count on me. Tell our friends that!" Two days later, on January 15th, Grishka was summoned for his first official interrogation. It was conducted by Colonel Pershin and Dobrzhinsky, the Odessa prosecutor. Everything was different now. No one stamped his feet or brandished a revolver. No one bawled "Yid" in his face or tugged his side-burns that had grown so long in these two months. Dobrzhinsky, a blond and rather dandified Pole, behaved extremely politely, almost benevolently, asking very few questions, and *did most of the talking himself*. From what he said it appeared that the investigators knew absolutely everything. Grishka's comrades, captured recently in various places, were confessing and giving frank evidence. Many were honestly repenting, many were writing long and very substantial explanations, giving names, dates and addresses. They were eager to relieve their consciences, competing in open-heartedness, because they were all young and still hoped by means of honest confession to improve their chances in life and start afresh. Grishka listened in stunned astonishment. What comrades could these be? Who exactly? Well, he need not know at present, names were not what mattered. The point was that a huge, nation-wide process of disintegration of the revolutionary party was taking place.

And again Dobrzhinsky went on talking himself, about the Lipetsk Congress, reeling off names, aliases, describing the meetings in the Petersburg taverns before Solovyov's attempt, the arguments about Orsini's bomb and the revolver, and then about the Moscow tunnel and the plans to mine the Malaya Sadovaya Street. This final piece of information upset Grishka badly, for it confirmed that one of the people close to the Committee had fallen into the hands of the police. The talk of mining the Malaya Sadovaya, along which the tsar rode every Sunday for the changing of the guard at the Engineers' Fortress, had come to Grishka's ears in Moscow. The Janitor or one of the others had mentioned it to him in passing, but the idea was top secret and could only be referred to in the briefest terms among trusted comrades. Surely the warder could not have heard Grishka whispering to Fedka? He might have caught a few snatches, but not all this mass of information. So some of the comrades must have been caught and were giving it away. But all the same, when Dobrzhinsky raised his pen and prepared to write, "From you Gospodin Goldenberg, we expect only a few explanations", Grishka stubbornly shook his head, "No!"

Now it was much more difficult. Something had snapped, he had lost his support, and it began to seem pointless to hold out and keep silent. But for some time, another two weeks, Grishka, his resistance stiffened by a vague premonition, continued to deny everything. Dobrzhinsky laughed in his face. They knew details about Kharkov that even the Petersburg leaders could not have known—about the Elder, about Blinov and Kuznetsov (these two, according to Dobrzhinsky, had already been arrested and made full confessions), and about Danilov the chemist, who had also been arrested.

Grishka decided that the traitor was Mitrofan Blinov. He had never liked that lad. A weedy, half-grown aristocrat, a weak-chested creature who went to the Crimea to cure his anaemia. The thought put him in a rage. Yes, he was betraying them, the dog. The whole round-up in Kharkov had been his work. But what about the rest? Moscow, Petersburg? Suddenly a terrifying thought occurred to him. Who could have known just as much, almost as much, as Grishka himself? Nobody else; only he himself. And he was the one. *He had been giving it away*. Through Fedka. This was the terrifying thought that flashed through his mind. He remembered how only a little

more than a month ago the three who were condemned to death had been led at night down the corridor past Grishka's cell. Vitka had managed to shout, "Comrades, they'll be executing us tomorrow! Avenge us!" The shout was so heart-rending that Grishka had decided that very night to kill Panyutin. That scoundrel, Totleben's assistant, was regarded as Odessa's chief executioner. The comrades outside had decided to kill him, that was definite. But why, Grishka reasoned, should they waste their strength? He was finished anyway. He started thinking how best to do it. During an interrogation or by luring him to his cell on some pretext? Panyutin was interested in Grishka and would respond if a good pretext could be invented. And what to kill him with? He had talked it over all night with Fedka. Fedka was too scared and urged Grishka not to try. The next day three gendarmes had entered the cell and put both Grishka and Fedka in irons. Why? For what reason? Grishka had been most surprised and indignant. And for several days he had been taken for interrogation in fetters, and then the fetters had been removed and the interrogations ended. So what did all this mean, oh my God? Grishka had not yet reached any conclusion, it was only a thought, a conjecture, and suddenly the smiling Dobrzhinsky shattered him with new and terrible news. In Petersburg the famous secret printing press, the one that printed the proclamations and the newspaper the *People's Will,* had been discovered. Its editors had been arrested. There had been quite a battle and one of the criminals had shot himself.

And he showed Grishka the photographs. One he recognised as Bukh, and another as a Jewish printer who had recently arrived from Berlin, the third, a woman's face, was familiar, he had seen her in Petersburg, but did not know her name. Another photograph was of Alexander Kvyatkovsky. And there was yet another, of a man lying on the floor, face upturned, moustache protruding, mouth wide-open—the suicide.

"You see how many victims! How many young lives!" Dobrzhinsky said. "When will this blood-letting end?"

Grishka looked at the kind stern face of "Alexander I", Kvyatkovsky, and his mind went back to a year ago: the taverns, the tobacco smoke, the half-whispered conversations, daring, madly gay, when it had seemed that it would all be decided in a few days. The grimly resolute Solovyov, the

Janitor with his stammer, the silent Kobylyansky, and the two of them: Kvyatkovsky and Grishka. Yes, and there had been a sixth—Zund! Such a clever, cunning fellow.... And now they had got Kvyatkovsky. There was no one else. Who was left? Solovyov had been hung, Kobylyansky arrested in August, Zund in October, in the Public Library, and in November, Grishka himself. Only the Janitor, God willing, was still free. And nothing had been done, nothing decisive.

"The best people we have, the flower of the nation, the hope of Russia, are perishing.... People who desire the good of Russia...." Who was speaking Grishka's thoughts in another voice? Strangely, this regretful murmuring and sorrowful nodding of the head came from the blond gentleman in civil service uniform. "They desire that which is good, but do that which is evil.... What a regrettable misunderstanding.... No one understands each other, that is the root of the evil...."

He went on in the same soft, sympathetic tone:

"Gospodin Goldenberg, you know perfectly well that the essence of the matter is not that you should admit: yes, it was I who killed Kropotkin. We know that without your telling us. Something much greater and more important is at stake." Again he lowered his voice to a whisper and their eyes met, penetratingly, searchingly. "Russia must be saved! A tremendous drama is being enacted. Before the eyes of the whole world. And nobody cares. Nobody—don't you agree?"

"When has the world ever cared about Russia?" Grishka said.

"Quite so, you are a clever man, Gospodin Goldenberg, and you have grasped my idea at once. No one will save us, only we, Russians, ourselves. The one thing that has to be achieved is understanding! The authorities must understand the youth, and youth, the authorities. We must stop this orgy of executions, deaths, spite and mutual distrust. You think everything at the top is calm and unanimous? Do you think there is no one up there who is not sickened by..." his whisper became almost inaudible, "Panyutin's and Chertkov's reprisals? I know some very highly placed persons who rage when they hear of new arrests and court martials. What an unfortunate country this is! The Bulgarians, the Rumanians have their constitutions, the Finns have for seventy years enjoyed the benefits of representative government because they have their own *seim,*

which was granted to them by the Emperor Alexander Pavlovich. And only we, native Russians...."

"But why don't these highly placed persons...."

"That is just the paradox of the moment. 'Why?' Because of this fatal disunity! The intelligent people at the top and the level-headed ones below are disunited. That's what I mean when I say the main thing now is understanding. The revolvers must be knocked out of the hands of the fanatics, and the ropes snatched from the hands of the government executioners, the Frolovs wearing general's epaulettes. Such honest and intelligent people as you, Gospodin Goldenberg, having realised their errors...."

"I didn't say that!" Grishka shouted.

"Your error lay in the fact that you, like myself, were eager to stop the bloodshed, but you employed for this purpose a means that only increased the flow of blood. There is no time for delay! Russia is dying, shedding its life blood, the best, the young blood; its strength is failing, its hopes fading. If resolute steps are not taken now.... Bear in mind, Gospodin Goldenberg, our conversation is private. What passes between us is known only to a few persons, whose names it is too early yet to divulge. If you were to inform certain other people of our conversation you would do great harm. But I should deny everything and you would gain nothing. So I do not advise you to chatter. But I do advise you to think things over well, to discuss and weigh matters, to look at things from the lofty standpoint of history, because it may be you—yes, you, Gospodin Goldenberg—who will be able to do Russia an inestimable service. You will save a whole generation and, I would add, a most noble-hearted generation of Russian people."

"How, I wonder?"

"As was said earlier, the need is for understanding. A need for calm and complete clarity. To create an atmosphere of trust and the possibility of acting together. There is no one who could do more than you—let us not be overmodest, Gospodin Goldenberg—to help Russia."

This was followed by nights of delirium. Grishka had astonishing visions. He appeared from heaven like the Messiah, like Jesus. He was appealing to the government and the revolutionaries. There was an enormous trial where everyone was judged—tsars, ministers, gendarmes, terrorists, advocates of

peaceful propaganda, Rabbi Mishuris, his Latin teacher from the Kiev-Podolsk classical progymnasium, who used to pull Grishka's ear so painfully, muttering "pro memoria", and the escort soldiers during his Archangel exile, who had beaten him up so brutally one day, and it all ended in magnificent choral singing. Everyone was singing with tears in their eyes. Grishka awoke. His heart was thumping. He sat up on his bed, seized with a kind of boisterous, befuddling energy. In his lucid moments he saw it all with a special clarity. Yes, it was his fate, his destiny, he could save thousands of lives, stop the bloodbath, bring goodness and peace to the world. But not a soul must know about his conversations with Dobrzhinsky. He was afraid that the warders would notice his excitement. He lay down and covered himself with the blanket. Sleep had vanished. His head was buzzing, his brain restless. He wanted to get moving, run about, drink vodka, any kind, even the English stuff, make speeches....

Three days later Grishka confessed that he had killed Kropotkin.

For Andrei December turned out to be a month of tremendous strain. Life in the Petersburg underground bore no comparison with that of Odessa, Kharkov or Kiev. Scores of people, addresses, enormous plans, innumerable contacts, projects, possibilities, all tied up in some way with one another. In August, Andrei had scarcely tasted the Petersburg way of life, hut then the movement was only just getting under way, they were still quarrelling and haggling. The supporters of the People's Will and the Land-Sharers had been hurriedly completing the process of their separation. And now one group was pushing ahead with its plans, while the others, so rumour had it, were already packing their bags for flight to Europe. From morning to night Andrei was busy chasing about the winter-bound city that was always either slippery or slushy or wreathed in frost-laden fog, making contact with people in the taverns, the libraries, the streets, then travelling to the outlying working-class districts, to Kronstadt, to Kibalchich's workshop where the dynamite was made, to the printing press, the editorial office, and keeping rendezvous with the man who, masquerading as a joiner, had penetrated the Winter Palace and was preparing a big job there. This was Stepan Khalturin,

an ordinary working man of splendid courage, intelligence and personal magnetism. A year previously he and Obnorsky had organised the Northern League of Russian Workers. The League had more than two hundred members, its prestige was growing, proclamations were issued, strikes organised. A massive strike had taken place at the New Cotton Spinnery. But at the end of summer the chance had arisen of getting into the palace as a joiner. Stepan had consulted with Anya Yakimova, Baska. He was not a member of the People's Will and usually acted independently—he guarded his *worker's distinctiveness* rather jealously and the whole Northern League was similarly attuned, they accepted only workers as members—but here was a dazzling prospect for terrorism and he had decided to consult the experts.

The person he knew best on the People's Will Committee was Anya Yakimova, who came from his own home town of Vyatka. She put him in touch with the right people and they said, "Well, go ahead. You might be able to finish off the tsar." And so it had all begun, not very seriously at first. In September, Khalturin with a passport bearing the name of Batyshkov took up employment as a joiner in the Winter Palace and was installed in a workshop in the cellar. His contact was Kvyatkovsky. The operation was highly secret, to the same degree as Kletochnikov's service in the Third Section. But whereas Kletochnikov had right from the start and continuously for almost a year provided the Committee with uniquely valuable information, Khalturin's work was yielding no positive results and any possibility of a successful outcome seemed fantastic. Andrei remembered Baska's hinting while they were still in Aleksandrovsk that there was a man who intended to obtain access to the palace as a worker, a daring and resolute man, but somehow the chances of success had seemed very thin. Surely the palace would be swarming with gendarmes. Besides, in autumn they had thought very little, if at all, about this enterprise because all their efforts had been directed at Aleksandrovsk and Moscow. If those attempts had succeeded, the palace job would, of course, have been abandoned. But they had failed. Kvyatkovsky had been arrested and the unbelievable Khalturin project that was being carried out in the deepest secrecy—hardly anyone knew about it—had suddenly become the party's main hope.

Andrei was curious to meet Khalturin. He had heard a good

deal about him from the Janitor, from Baska and from Andrei Presnyakov. They said he was well read, a studious, self-educated man with a sound knowledge of the socialist writers and the French revolution and arguing with him on such subjects was no easy matter. Like many workers he was completely indifferent to the peasant, to the commune, and could not grasp the idea that the peasant was the mainstay of the Russian revolution and all future Russian organisation of state. He had leanings towards the West, towards the German socialists—that was his ideal. But it seemed that this year's smashing up of the League and the arrest of nearly all his comrades had damaged that ideal considerably. He seemed to have understood that this colossus was not to be overthrown by strikes and study circles in the German style. There was a situation for you! Both the peasant supporters of the People's Will and the proletarianists, disillusioned in and despairing of their respective paths, had converged on the one solution: terror.

They were introduced by the Janitor at a secret address. Khalturin was tall and had a smallish beard and moustache. His looks were somber, his speech brief, with the broad "o"-sounds of the Vyatka region; he seemed older than his twenty-three years. His appearance was that of an ordinary Petersburg workman, perhaps even a master craftsman, well provided for and earning good money. He wore top-boots, a long black overcoat and a clumsy-looking fur hat, also black, which, on entering the flat, he for some reason took off, dropped on to his left fist, and while he was talking kept spinning on his fist. His manner was calm, almost casual.

He at once asked about Kvyatkovsky's arrest. Obviously he was deeply disappointed by it—not upset or frightened, but disappointed. Actually he had every reason to be badly scared. "Alexander I" had been in possession of a diagram of the Winter Palace that Stepan had drawn and given to him not long before his arrest. On it the dining room that was to be blown up was marked with a cross. They could only hope that Kvyatkovsky had managed to destroy this drawing, but who could tell? As yet there was no precise information. Stepan continued to live peacefully in the cellar of the palace, sleeping with his head on a pillowful of dynamite, but perhaps the police were already on the prowl and preparing to pounce at any moment.

Andrei could not restrain a smile. It was such a pleasure to look at this amazing man.

"This is 'Boris'," the Janitor said. "Now you'll be with him. You had better fix a new meeting place."

Khalturin nodded and, narrowing his eyes, gave Andrei a somber searching look.

"You're from the University, aren't you? A student?"

"I was a student. But you've also studied somewhere, I believe? So Baska told me."

"Yes, I studied...." Khalturin gave a short laugh, and added reluctantly, "at the Vyatka Technical School. But that was a dead loss. No use to anyone. My main learning was elsewhere."

"I see what you mean," Andrei said. "It's the same with everybody."

The Janitor took his leave and hurried away. As usual he had any number of other matters to attend to in one day. Andrei and Stepan were left alone in the twilight of the winter afternoon. They drank tea and talked in half whispers about the great secret. Stepan said that he had carried into the palace about two and a half poods of dynamite, but this was still not enough. The thickness overhead was enormous; they would need not less than eight poods, to make sure. The palace guards knew him by this time and let him through without even looking him over. On the whole the carelessness and muddle in the palace were something terrible. This was all to the good, of course, but still you couldn't help being surprised on their behalf. To think what brainless folk were put in positions of authority! Thievery, drinking, inefficiency were rife among the palace underlings, and the gendarmes and stewards whose business it was to keep a check on the servants did nothing but pilfer and paw the girls. With the gendarme who supervised the work of the joiners Stepan was on good terms and had even persuaded the fool that he intended marrying his daughter. Andrei listened with admiration. The operation was beginning to look more and more feasible. But besides the drawing that might have fallen into police hands, there was another cause for alarm. Might not one of the workers who had belonged to the League and heard about the offer of employment in the palace let out something by accident? The offer had been made at first not to Stepan, but to someone else.

It had been discussed among the workers. Were they all to be trusted?

"The working man is more trustworthy than anyone else," Stepan said. "If anybody had blabbed I wouldn't have lasted this long. No, you needn't worry your head on that score."

"So someone else does know?"

"No one knows anything!" Stepan dismissed the matter almost rudely. "And remember this, my good friend: there are less traitors among workers than among the intellectuals. Their bones are brittle, they break easily; but ours are strong and springy, they don't crack."

This was familiar talk. Andrei had heard the same kind of thing from the Odessa lads, from Vaska Merkulov, from Makar Teterka, and from Vanichka as well, and he himself still harboured a secret wariness of the intellectuals and the noblemen's sons, but in what Stepan had said he sensed something else—distrust of anyone who was not a worker. But surely Russia was still a raw country, a country of peasants. So what did this mean: distrust of Russia?

"What about Sharashkin and Nikonov who we executed for treachery? Weren't they workers?" Andrei asked.

"You can name all kinds! Maybe they weren't workers, who knows..." Stepan responded crossly.

He knew perfectly well that they had been workers. Sharashkin, whom Presnyakov had killed, had been a skilled worker on the Warsaw line. Nikonov, killed by Ivichevich in Rostov, had also been a genuine worker and a genuine provocateur. The Executive Committee had even put out a special pamphlet about the killing of Nikonov. Andrei recalled another story he had heard in Aleksandrovsk from Baska—about Khalturin's friend and fellow townsman Shvetsov, who had lived with Stepan and shared the same workshop. Baska had often visited Khalturin to bring him newspapers and proclamations, and in August she brought him an order from the recently formed People's Will Party for a type case. For some reason—either it didn't suit him or he was too busy—Stepan passed the job on to Shvetsov, who had the idea of striking a deal with the Third Section and making a bit of money on the side. He demanded an advance from the police, something like three or four thousand rubles, and as an advance from himself denounced a girl in the underground who was living in his flat; she was arrested at once and exiled. The whole deal became known the very

next day through Kletochnikov, who had been present during the making of it between Kirillov and Shvetsov. Then there was the problem of what to do. How should Baska behave with Shvetsov? She could not show her knowledge because this would immediately expose Kletochnikov. The police were counting on the type case to lead them to the printing press. Where would it be delivered? Somehow, but in such a manner as not to arouse suspicion, they had to get rid of that case. Khalturin suspected nothing and this scoundrel made the case in no time. Baska sensed that she was under constant observation. Luckily, however, the case turned out to be of very light-coloured wood and because of this brightness—it could be seen a mile away!—was safely rejected. There followed a long story—Andrei had forgotten part of it—of how Shvetsov had pestered Baska to go out to the islands with him, to the tea-house there. She had refused and finally they had agreed upon a rendezvous in Aleksandrovsky Gardens that was infested with police spies. She came wearing a veil. Six disguised detectives led by Kirillov were in attendance and the Janitor and Kibalchich also came along to have a look at Shvetsov. Anyway Baska managed to fool them all. She gave the detectives the slip—and not only the detectives, even the Janitor and Kibalchich lost sight of her!—and disappeared. She was very proud a few days later when the Janitor said to her, "You covered up your tracks brilliantly, Madam. That's my training. I'd like to know where you got to after the tobacco shop, the one on the right of the Aleksandrovsky Gardens?" Baska remained in hiding for several days and Shvetsov, having lost hope of meeting her and fearing the wrath of the Third Section, slipped away to his home town, in the Vyatka Province. But he was found there, of course, the money was confiscated, and he himself was put away. He was a real traitor of the thirty-pieces-of-silver variety, but with a slight streak of parochial patriotism—Kletochnikov reported the whole Shvetsov epic in detail from the agents' messages. He had, for instance, promised to betray the whole revolutionary organisation with the exception of his two fellow townsfolk: Khalturin and Baska.

Baska spoke of this with disgust. Had Stepan known about it?

Andrei asked, "What about your former pal Shvetsov—wasn't he a worker?"

"No!" Khalturin answered quickly. "That louse never became a worker, though he rubbed shoulders with us.... He was a typical kulak—he'd sell his father and mother for rubles."

"But he spared you."

"Me? I don't know about that. They said so. All I know is I won't spare him—my hand won't waver...."

And as if to put an end to the conversation, which was taking the unpleasant line that not all workers were quite such fine people as he liked to believe, Khalturin declared agressively, "Were the workers to blame for the League's going to pieces? You know yourself why it happened. Just as soon as we get things going—bang!—the intellectuals let somebody down and the searches and arrests start all over again. Yes, it's got to be ended in one stroke. There's no other way, as far as I can see."

They talked of many things that day. About the all-Russia workers' organisation that Khalturin, now a desperate terrorist loner, still dreamed of, about the Northern League that had taken such a battering and had actually gone under, about the International, about Marx, about the "legals" and "illegals", about the need for a workers' League to be built on legality, then it could be a mass membership force, although the legal organisations were easily and quickly wiped out because they were disapproved of and the police went for them first.

Khalturin confessed, "You know, Boris, why I decided on this—what's the name your people have given it? This *gingerbread,* eh? The tsar must be killed by a worker. I mean a man from the people. Do you see why? Because the tsar has betrayed the people, and for treachery—you yourself know what the penalty is. A *gingerbread* in your gullet."

Since then they had met twice. Andrei passed Stepan the dynamite in small bags, which he attached to his belt so that they hung down inside his trousers. He had seen him last just before Christmas. Stepan had been paler and grimmer than usual, but just as calm and unhurried. He said that he was having trouble with his head. It must be the dynamite in his pillow, which gave off nitroglycerine fumes. After breathing them all night he got up feeling as if he'd caught the plague. Andrei asked, hadn't he got enough by now? No, he said, he needed more. He was heading for the Arcade, to buy his fiancée, the gendarme's daughter, a Christmas present. She

had asked for a necklace in Chinese style; you couldn't find one anywhere because they were all the fashion at the moment. The young ladies snapped them up at once.

He walked away sedately and disappeared among the crowd. The streets were thronged with people—hustle and bustle, the Christmas rush, the stalls and magazines were packed with customers, some of the merchants had come out into the streets and were touting their wares in the fine, gently falling snow. There had been a sudden thaw, the air was damp and smelled of scattered pine needles, of horse sweat, of the smoke of children's Christmas crackers, of festivities and the end of the pre-Christmas fast.

They decided to celebrate the New Year at one of the safe flats. Everyone was longing for at least a little fun, something to break the tension, a moment's freedom. December had been a tough month on all counts, both because Kvyatkovsky and Shirayev had been arrested, and also, on the same day as Shirayev, Serġei Martynovsky, the master of the "celestial chancellery" along with all his equipment, forms, passports and rubber stamps, and because they had been forced to move quickly to new flats, which was never easy, and also because December had proved to be a month of dissension. They had argued a great deal and in great earnest. Tikhomirov and Morozov had clashed irreconcilably and each member of the Committee had been obliged to take sides. At the beginning of December, Tigrych told Andrei to go to Sapyorny Street and talk to Sparrow, Morozov, and Olga *impressively*.

"There's some hysteria brewing there," he said, and gave one of his ironic little laughs that made the corners of his lips twitch.

Sapyorny Street was where they had their printing press. It was the best hidden of all their hiding places. Morozov and Olga had taken refuge there, in this safe spot, after their flat had been raided. At this time the third issue of the *People's Will*, containing the programme, was being prepared for the press, and it was this programme that all the fuss was about. Morozov was accusing Tikhomirov of distorting the programme that had been accepted at the Lipetsk Congress, that he was tending towards Jacobinism and something very much like Nechayev tactics. Andrei considered this to be nonsense. This

was not the thing to worry about now, this was no target for their fervour and enthusiasm. What programme could there be at this moment? Only one. He saw Khalturin's bloodless face and heard his whisper coming from white lips, "It's too early yet.... I'm not ready...."

"Have you talked to them yourself?"

"I was there the day before yesterday. It's impossible to talk." Tigrych swept his hand hopelessly. "They're excited and keyed up, bursting with irritation. I'm a usurper, a Napoleon. Olga shouted that history would not forgive me for it. They're demanding an emergency meeting of the Committee."

"All right," Andrei said. "I'm going to Kronstadt today. I'll be at Sapyorny tomorrow."

He was used to being asked for help, to being appealed to as a judge and arbiter. It had come about of itself. For some reason if anyone was needed to speak *impressively* it was always him. And even Tigrych, that jaundiced fellow, secretly complacent and mocking, readily bowed before Andrei's authority. Goodness knows what did it! Perhaps the fact that he never tried any tricks and always said what he thought. Or was there some other explanation? After all, none of them were given to trickery. There was not a trickster among them. Then what? There was a quality, a very important one, he was proud of it and it was a decisive quality for a man of action—the ability to reach down into the depths and the diversity, and grasp that one main thing. And now, in the middle of December 1879, this main thing was the joiner in the cellar of the Winter Palace. How could anyone fail to appreciate this simple fact? Now all programmes and theories, and even the future of every one of them, and the whole party, the whole Russian colossus, depended on whether this man who lay there at night on his wooden bunk, choking with the fumes of nitroglycerine.... Andrei could think of nothing else. He lay awake at night and his thoughts, memory, brain, all the power of his imagination, were concentrated on the man down there in that cellar, also awake, and coughing, coughing....

In Kronstadt he was trying to get to know some naval officers. It was the worst possible time for striking up acquaintances. Searches were going on all over Petersburg. Thunderstruck by the Moscow attack, the police had quickly guessed that the explosion on the Kursk line had been "Petersburg work", and they had descended on the capital with all their

fury. People were detained and searched in theatres, at railway stations, in furnished rooms, on the merest suspicion, from a snatch of conversation or because they had been too absent-minded or short-sighted to bow to the tsar's carriage. Students were searched on the basis of where they came from. During the first week all who were from Nizhny Novgorod had their rooms raided, then the Vyatka people, then those from Yaro-. slavl. As usual there was a great deal of fuss, confusion and foolishness. The Janitor related the story of an Academician, a Lithuanian and a practical joker, who when asked by a policeman whether he had any explosives in his possession, answered, "Yes, I have" and, producing a box of matches, started striking them in the policeman's face and scared the man out of his wits. He then snatched up a piece of paper and started chewing it. Keeping the police at bay, he threatened to swallow it. When they eventually got it from him by force it turned out to be rubbish. In Goncharnaya Street, in the house where Stepan Shirayev had been arrested and where the rooms were cheaper, seventy "ladies from the Nevsky" were taken in charge along with the worthy family men who were spending the night with them. And the very same night these gentlemen were taken under escort to their homes for purposes of identification. This was fun indeed. But in the midst of all this fun, this babel, these tears and police frenzy it was quite easy for even the most experienced person to get picked up by chance.

In Sapyorny Street they were expecting Andrei. They had few visitors, not more than one or two a week. Bukh and Ivanova were considered to be the owners of the flat. They sometimes went out. So did the servant; the rest remained permanently indoors. The rest were the Sparrow and Olga, and the two printers. They all looked grey-faced and sickly. Andrei was struck by one of the printers, Lubkin. Thin as a rake, with a pale hairless face, he looked like a young monk, and spoke in a high-pitched girlish voice. For some reason he was called "Birdie". They peppered Andrei with questions. They were particularly worried about those who had been arrested. Was there any fresh news? Perhaps there was a traitor in their midst? Andrei said that the question of treachery had not arisen; people were talking of carelessness, failure to observe the rules of conspiracy, but nobody had any exact information.

"Why did they let themselves be arrested?" Sonya Ivanova asked. "Why didn't Alexander shoot?"

"Probably he didn't have the chance."

"He must have been in a hurry to destroy something, there wasn't time...."

"But he knew what was in store for him!" Ivanova went on excitedly. "I can't understand it. If they come here, we're not going to surrender. I'll be the first to start shooting."

"I think he probably didn't want to endanger Zhenya Figner," Morozov said. "If she hadn't been with him...."

Bukh who had been silent up to now said, "I'm worried about Martynovsky. Among all the papers he was keeping, there was something about us. But I can't remember exactly what."

Bukh was a great man for silence and anything he did say sounded significant. There was a pause while they all tried to remember. No one could think of anything.

Sonya Ivanova dismissed the matter with a reckless wave of the hand.

"Oh, well, as one of our writers says, *vogue la galère!* Come what may. But I warn you all—I'm going to shoot."

And she surveyed them all with a kind of grim solemnity.

"For God's sake, Sonya, what are you worried about? We shall all shoot," said one of the compositors, Tsukerman, shrugging his shoulders. "Why shouldn't we, if we have anything to shoot with?"

How Andrei longed to tell these voluntary prisoners, who lived in constant expectation of a raid that would mean their death, that they need only hold out a little while longer, another two or three weeks, and a grandiose event would occur that would release them from the unbearable strain and open their prison doors. But this could not be said. The only thing he could say in consolation was, "Well, you've got through the week, thank God, and you're still safe and sound. Let's hope for the best."

"A week is no time," Bukh responded.

He was right. Kolya Bukh, as taciturn and fearless as any hero out of Fenimore Cooper, was the most experienced of the printers; he had printed the first illegal newspaper *The Beginning*. He was said to be a fanatic of his trade. Life did not exist for him without type cases and the smell of printer's ink.

There was another way and Andrei suggested, "What about moving to another flat?"

"Easier said than done!" Ivanova laughed. "Do you realise what it would mean for us to move with all our chattels? There's not another flat like this in all Petersburg. It's unique. We could live here for years without anyone noticing us."

But Andrei himself could see the objection. To move now would mean holding up publication of the paper. That would never do. No, they must carry on as usual, at the risk of a raid and their destruction. Bukh withdrew to another room, the printers also returned to their own affairs somewhere at the back of the flat, and Sonya and the maid, a simple but rather nervous-looking girl with a strange smile, set out for the shop with their basket. Andrei had met them on the stairs when he arrived and they had stayed to talk with him. Now only Morozov, Olga Lyubatovich and Andrei were left in the drawing room; the Sparrow and Olga seemed to have been waiting impatiently for this moment.

"I didn't want to bring this up in front of everybody," the Sparrow began in a low voice. "In fact, I didn't want to bring it up at all. But there's no alternative. Olga and I, as two members of the Executive Committee, demand an urgent meeting of the Committee to discuss the question of the programme. Lev is taking advantage of our helplessness, the fact that we're stuck here in quarantine...."

"What advantage is it to him?" Andrei asked in surprise.

"His advantage is that he has been round to all the members of the Committee with his text and convinced them all while our hands are tied!" Olga's Gypsy brown face had actually paled with anger. "What is it he wants? Another letter like the one he got from Masha Krylova? He will if he's not careful—I'll write it."

"There's no need for letters. What we need is a general meeting. Let's have it out in the open," the Sparrow said, making conciliatory gestures in the direction of his hot-headed mate. But he was no calmer himself. His hands were shaking and his pale face and blazing eyes expressed extreme agitation.

"I remember Auntie Masha's letter very well," Olga said. "It astonished me last summer when I read it. How could anyone write in such a tone to her comrades, I thought. 'I refuse to allow the moral torture that you have inflicted on me.... Listen, gentlemen, despite all your efforts you have been

unable to infect me with hatred or enmity towards you.' Something on those lines. And you had better not go on trying. They had driven the woman to breaking point, to the brink of destruction. I didn't understand at the time, but now I see how it is done."

"Olga, calm yourself! We must have a meeting and discuss matters frankly...."

"And the paper can wait?" Andrei asked.

"Yes, it can!" Olga cried. "Because the questions to be decided are too important. We may be deciding the fate of Russia!"

Andrei had read Krylova's letter in August. It had been written earlier, in connection with the split in the Land and Freedom movement, and the reason for it had been similar. Krylova had been in charge of the printing press and had sharply opposed some of the terrorist-oriented articles, articles written by the same Morozov. Andrei reminded them of this. Why refer to Krylova if she had only recently been their opponent? Then the point at issue had been the justification for terrorism and political killings, and this had led to a real split. What was it now? The stumbling block was the idea of a political coup, the seizure of power. The enlarged text of the programme that Lev had proposed and on his own initiative sent to be printed in the third issue of the paper, was, so Morozov considered, a deviation in the direction of Jacobinism. The programme passed by the Lipetsk Congress had not said that the party aimed at taking power. The aim had been to force the government by means of disorganisation and terror to grant the people themselves the opportunity of expressing their will. The People's Will was something different from the will of a group of conspirators eager to seize power! All the articles Morozov had written recently had on various pretexts been rejected by Lev, who was stubbornly sticking to his line. Probably Maria Nikolayevna's influence was playing a part. She was an incorrigible Jacobin, with strong leanings towards Zaichnevsky. Distrust of the people's strength and even a concealed contempt of the people—that was what that meant. Maria Nikolayevna had once confessed that she didn't like the Russian peasants because of their meekness and stupidity. Lev himself, the great theoretician, had no very strong belief in the people or in the revolution, and he had once said as much at Maria Nikolayevna's flat. Olga had been very surprised at the

time. "Why are you working in revolutionary circles then?" He had said, "Because my old comrades are there." What mattered to him was the comrades, the circle, the group with its own code of life and death. Couldn't Boris see that any hopes a small group might have of seizing power were in the first place immoral, secondly, selfish, and thirdly, which was the main thing, unrealisable? If that was to be the programme, then kindly change the name. Not the People's Will but, let us say, "Our Will" or the "Will of the Two Hundred".

The Sparrow, saying all this agitatedly and quickly, though still in a low voice so as not to alert Bukh who was working in the next room, was twisting in his hands the sheets of the first run-off of the leading article. Andrei knew the article. Lev had written it a few days ago and read it to him. They had argued at length over some points.

"In that article you are holding," Andrei said, "there are some risky passages. I wasn't sure whether they were necessary. Lev convinced me, and so did the Janitor. The passage about the lack of sympathy, for instance, where it says that not only society and the people remain idle spectators of the struggle, but even...." He took the page from Morozov, found the lines he wanted and read out the rest, " '... but even the socialists themselves are often inclined to push the burden of this fearful duel on to the shoulders of the Executive Committee alone.' You see? And further they give examples. A spy was found to have infiltrated the study circles of some worker socialists. The workers complained and were told, 'Why don't you send him to kingdom come?' 'Well, we've informed the Executive Committee!' they replied. Splendid! As if they couldn't deal with a spy themselves without the help of the Committee. There was a similar case with a students' study circle. They also appealed to the Committee. And Lev writes: 'The Russian people just can't get along without somebody to boss them.' "

"I know all that well enough," Morozov said. "Why are you quoting it?"

"He wrote that article splendidly, there's no argument on that score," Olga said.

"Yes, there was. I thought we were showing everybody our ulcers, the weakness of the movement. But they convinced me that it was better to speak openly of such things. The indifference and passivity of the radicals! Not to mention the people.

You would be right if we had two or three hundred years in reserve. History moves too slowly, it must be given a push. It's the seizure of power that pushes history forward. We are acting on behalf of the people. And on their behalf we shall give them a constitution and the Assembly of the Land."

"On behalf of the people! Isn't that self-styled?"

"No, because we are one flesh with the people. We are the children of peasants, land surveyors, priests, sergeant-majors, the children of former slaves, of freed serfs...."

"Oh, Boris, how you love making fine speeches."

Olga frowned. "You ought to be a preacher, not a revolutionary."

"Revolution is preaching."

"Very well, then, we demand a general meeting!" the Sparrow said with an expression of wilful obstinacy that he must have retained from the days of his childhood on the family estate and that sometimes suddenly slipped out. He even thumped the table with the palm of his hand. "And another thing, friends: find us a flat. Living here in idleness, without anything useful to do, is quite unbearable."

A flat and passports were soon found for them. The meeting was held. Only a few took the Sparrow and Olga's side; among them was Sonya Perovskaya. Many hard things were said. Olga maintained that the reason for their failure was the plot organised by Tikhomirov. While they had been confined to the flat in Sapyorny Street, he had been at work on the Committee members, particularly the new ones who had not attended the Lipetsk Congress—Anya Korba, Grachevsky, and also Natalya Nikolayevna Olovennikova, Maria Nikolayevna's sister. Some small amendments were made to the programme, but it remained essentially the one that Tigrych, the Janitor and Andrei were defending. The aim was political revolution, the seizure of power from the government and its transference to a constituent assembly.

Give history a push! Drive it on, drive it on, the old nag! There was no time to waste on lengthy discussion. The new issue of the *People's Will* must come out on time. It was like the admiral's flag on a man-of-war, signalling its readiness for battle.

And in a week or two or, at the most, three....

Everyone who knew the details lived in this expectation, and those who did not were nevertheless vaguely aware that

something quite out of the ordinary was in the offing. And it was in this state of half-sensed impatience and expectation, when the dissension and disagreements had receded and were temporarily forgotten, that a few people came together to welcome in the new decade. None of them hoped to see its end, or even its middle years, or even one whole year of it. And yet they were all so young! So on a round table in the middle of the room they placed a large soup bowl filled with wine and rum and with lumps of sugar, lemon and various spices. The candles were blown out, but when they lighted the rum and the stupefyingly sweet spirituous aroma filled the room and the faces all round were lighted by the purple, quivering flames, Andrei suddenly felt—he was standing with Kolodkevich, closest of all to the bowl—that all these faces that seemed at this moment unusually stern, all these eyes focussed tensely on the flame, were united by something greater than love and hate, than their readiness to die, greater even than the ideas they were living for. This something, this enormous thing that had welded together a few people—among Russia's countless millions—could not be defined in words. But Andrei felt it on his skin, like a gust of wind, like a sudden attack of icy fever; his heart beat faster, tears came into his eyes, his fists clenched and this must have been instantly and passionately transmitted to them all. Morozov suddenly snatched a dagger out of his pocket and placed it on the bowl. Andrei at once placed his dagger across it. Someone else did the same, then the Janitor, and others, and Andrei began to sing the Gaidamak song: "Lo, behold, good people...". And everyone joined in, "The Ukraine has risen now!" When the hot punch was ready, they filled the glasses, and clinked them, burnt their mouths, and then it began to strike twelve. They all started hugging each other and kissing, and Sonya Perovskaya was next to Andrei. When he took her in his arms he felt her trembling. She was like a little girl, so small; she cleaved to him in the crowd and her hardness vanished. Her lips were cold. There had never been anything between them, but he knew that there would be. And very soon, because they had not much time left.

Then someone proposed a séance of spiritualism, using a saucer. Laughing and joking, they prepared the paper, wrote out the letters and seated themselves round the table. The first to be summoned was the spirit of the Emperor Nicholas I. He

was asked what kind of death was ordained for his son. The saucer slid about confusedly for some time and gave no clear indications, then suddenly an answer was received: by poison. What nonsense! Everyone was disappointed. After all, it was well known that he would die of something quite different.

Andrei suddenly said, "I give you a toast—to the working man!"

Those who knew what he meant clinked glasses and drank with special inspiration, and those who did not, joyfully supported the toast: yes, to the working man! To his success, of course! There was not a single working man at the table, but they all realised that in the long run they could do nothing and meant nothing without him. Someone struck up the "Marseillaise", then someone else sang some verses set to music:

I saw enslaved Russia before the altar shrine,
With clanking chains and lowered neck, she was praying for the tsar...

They went out into the snowy darkness. Somebody, evidently the porter, was stretched out in his long sheepskin across the gateway. Andrei took Sonya's hand. They walked fast. The hard-packed snow of the street crunched in the crisp frost. An hour later they climbed an iron staircase to the third floor. Sonya opened the door with her key and they entered a cold oblong-shaped room. Without lighting a lamp they began to take off their clothes. Then Sonya found a candle and shone it on the bed covered with a tartan plaid, the metal bowl on the table, and the jug and knife on the plate beside it. The air smelled faintly of kerosene. And in this room there was love that had neither a past nor a future, neither hope, nor dawn. Stripped of everything, it fell like snow, and its fate was that of snow—to disappear.

January was half gone. Andrei was meeting Stepan at the appointed spot and each meeting was grimmer than the last. Stepan was living an unbearable life. Clearly he could not hold out much longer. Sometimes he would not even talk to Andrei. He would merely nod and mutter through clenched teeth, "Not a hope..." and walk on without stopping, as if Andrei were a stranger. Andrei would follow him, catch up somewhere in the city, in a busy place and, walking at his side, patiently bear Stepan's bitter vexation and find out what was

going on. In January, the way of running things at the palace had changed. There had been a tightening up. Sudden searches were made; they were looking for something, tapping the walls. The servants had been told outright that a diagram of the palace with a cross over the dining room had been found in the possession of an arrested socialist. What this signified nobody knew, but it could not, of course, bode any good. Hence the tightening up and the searches. A system of brass identification disks had been introduced for the palace servants and everyone employed there; no one could go in or out without his disk. The pilfering, however, continued as bad as ever and Stepan himself was forced to steal, otherwise he would have been looked upon as a suspicious character. So he had to filch a few things. A jar of varnish, a few brushes, tools. Gradually Stepan began *to talk*, his irritation and fatigue went off, he became agitatedly cheerful and related some interesting facts. He was a skilled French polisher, the best in the palace. One day he had been sent to work in the royal suite, and suddenly Alexander had entered the room. Stepan froze in astonishment. Later he reproached himself for his momentary confusion. He had been carrying a hammer and one blow would have been enough. There would have been no further need for these elaborate and terrible preparations that were to cost so many lives. Animatedly he went on to relate another episode. In the middle of the night the gendarmes had burst into the cellar where Stepan and his fellow workers slept. Reveille! Lights on! And they themselves had lanterns. Stepan thought his end had come, that they were here to arrest him. But it turned out to be a search. Luckily, like everything else in the palace, the search was inefficient. They merely poked about on the surface, tapped here and there with their swords, then marched out again with much noise and clatter. But what a scare they had given him! When he smiled his face became quite youthful, but he smiled rarely.

And sometimes he spoke rudely to Andrei, in a bullying, impatient tone. Andrei could scarcely refrain from answering back in the same vein. It was not in his nature to forgive. But he forced himself to bear it. Because how could one compare? Stepan was living under a fantastic strain. This was the reason for his agitation and the cough that was steadily growing worse. Their arguments were always over one thing—there was not enough dynamite. Stepan kept asking for more, so as

to *make a sure job of it*. Andrei maintained that he had enough already—nearly three poods. The technicians—Kibalchich and Isayev—thought that would be sufficient.

"Unnecessary dynamite means unnecessary loss of life," Andrei said. "We don't want that. The Party wants only the tsar."

"Only the tsar! How can I get just the tsar for you? If they say that's heresy let them try themselves!" Stepan was shaking with nervous tension and his face was almost black. "There are bound to be other victims. What did you think? Yes, about fifty—at least. So count on that. That's fine talk on your part—only the tsar!"

Between the cellar and the dining room there was a whole floor, where the palace guard was quartered. Some of them would surely be killed. It was for fate to decide who would be on duty at that moment, and who would be the doomed men resting in the guardroom. Andrei was haunted by the thought of those unfortunate ones. So, not wishing to increase the store of dynamite and, quite apart from that, merely to reduce the risk—every day involved tremendous risk—he was hurrying Stepan. The dynamite was now being stored in the box on which Stepan slept. There was also a story behind that box. The joiners, the stove-keeper and the overseer had all asked in surprise what Stepan needed with such a clumsy great thing, which must have cost quite a lot of money. Stepan had explained that he wanted to get rich while he was in the palace. And it was quite true that he was, in fact, making good money and at Christmas had received a special bonus of a hundred rubles. Pretending to be a self-centred, money-grubbing peasant, he saved his wages and instead of squandering them on drink or food, bought things, which he packed away in the box. At the bottom of the box, under all these belongings, was the stock of dynamite. Andrei marvelled at his superhuman patience. Despite the steadily increasing strain, the fear of being discovered any day, any minute, he stubbornly built up his store of dynamite. Like the true craftsman he was, if he did a thing he was going to *make a sure job of it.*

It was impossible to argue with him.

At one of their meetings Andrei said, "Well, that's the lot, friend! There'll be no more dynamite. There isn't any more, it hasn't been made."

"Not made?"

"Yes, it's not made, not ready. We aren't running a factory, you know. And our people are not machines. You've got loads of it already—enough and to spare. It's time to set it off."

Stepan narrowed his red eyelids and scowled.

"They're not machines, eh? And I am, I suppose?" He fell into a thoughtful silence. "Setting it off is no problem, but will it work? And if not, who'll be to blame?"

"It'll work all right. You can't go on like this for ever, tempting fate.... Get ready to make the explosion, is that clear? If you wait much longer you'll have the gendarmes round again."

The reminder of the nocturnal search had its effect. That had been a real scare. Frowning and snorting with displeasure, he finally agreed. All right, he was ready, but he would have to wait for the right day and time. If only they would give him another five pounds of dynamite, then it would be a really *sure job*. Andrei promised to bring another five pounds next time, and be damned. And then—*vogue la galère*!

In the middle of January, the third issue of the *People's Will* appeared. This was the one over which there had been such a fight. In the morning the Janitor burst into Andrei's flat with a bundle of fresh newspapers.

"This is a bigger bombshell than any assassination!" the Janitor tumbled the inky-smelling sheets fanwise on the table. "Great work, Kolya Bukh and company! They know how to produce the goods! Look at that print, the way it's set up! *The Voice* isn't printed as well, not to mention the *News*. Ha-ha! And can you imagine what Alexander Nikolayevich is going to say to Alexander Romanovich this evening?"

Yes, Drenteln would catch it from the tsar. The fury in those quarters would be indescribable. After all, the third issue of this despicable rag had been published not in some out-of-the-way place abroad that no one could reach, but right here, in Petersburg. And yet no one had a clue where.

Kibalchich had been spending the night at Andrei's. All three grabbed copies of the paper, feeling them, rustling them, perusing them with delight, although they had read the whole thing already. It was a joyful beginning to the day. Over their morning tea there was more discussion of the programme. Here it was, printed in black and white, for all the world to read. "In our basic beliefs we are socialists and Narodniks. We are convinced that only on socialist principles can humanity

build a life of liberty, equality and fraternity, ensure general material well-being and all-round development of the individual and, therefore, progress...." Further, after a few brief but powerful paragraphs describing the present state of the country there followed the points of the programme. "We shall propagandise it until the revolution, we shall recommend it during the election campaign, we shall defend it in the Constituent Assembly."

They all remembered it perfectly, but the Janitor began reading aloud.

"Permanent popular representation.... Wide-based regional self-government.... Independence of the *mir*! That's an important point! I'm very glad we have that well to the fore, as the third point. The independence of the *mir,* as both an economic and administrative unit. Mark that! The land to belong to the people. Point five: A system of measures for transferring the factories and mills to the ownership of the workers. Six: Complete freedom of conscience, speech and the press.... Seven: Universal suffrage. Well, in my view, it's a splendid programme! What do you say?"

He looked at them with laughing eyes. Andrei and Kibalchich agreed. They were all happy that, at last, this had been published and people would read it and understand that the members of the People's Will were not just terrorists, mere destroyers, but people of firm beliefs who knew what they wanted. Up to now, up to the year 1880, mankind had produced no better programme upon which to build its social life. Yes, that was incontestable! Here was the essence of a thousand years of thought, of human suffering, the experience of the communists of ancient times, the socialists of all times, the Fourierists, the dreamers, the unfortunate Communards of Paris, the Russian schismatics who had taught dissent from Orthodoxy, and the most modern experts on surplus value and production relations. There was everything in those seven points.

This number also contained a letter from "Grognard" Mikhailovsky—on the need to introduce a law on the lines of the American law on the land belonging to him who tills it. And there were two pieces by Lev: the leading article and the article, "A Cat's Concert", which superbly castigated the Russian hack writers, taking as its epigraph Vaillant's dictum: "Society has only one duty towards its overlords—to put them

to death." Everything in this number was audacious, witty and clear-cut! But the Sparrow, Morozov, had prepared only two sections: the chronicle of persecution and information on police agents, based on Kletochnikov's sources. The question of the Sparrow had to be settled somehow. He was still out of temper and had told the Janitor that he felt he could be of no further use on the paper and wanted other work.

The only thing that cast a shadow on the joyful morning was the forthcoming talk with the Sparrow; there were too few of them for the cracks and divisions to be painless. The Janitor had agreed that they should meet in a tavern in Ligovka Street at one in the afternoon.

When they arrived, the Sparrow was already seated in a corner screened by a low wooden partition and a dirty strip of sailcloth, which gave it a certain amount of privacy from the rest of the room. His tousled head was buried in a newspaper. It looked as if he had all the tavern's newspapers in a heap on the table in front of him. The Janitor and Andrei at once began praising the new issue. The Sparrow listened absently for a while, then said, "You speak as if I was one of the contributors and accepting your congratulations. You know that my part has been reduced to the minimum. All I did was chronicle of persecution and a summary of the notebooks of Nikolai Vasilyevich, which I receive from you, Sasha. 'Kholodovsky, Mikhail Yefimovich, aged 38, medium height, reddish face, deformed nose, moustache, noticeable signs of dissolute living. His wife, who attends courses in midwifery, a young woman, also a police spy....' My God, anyone off the street could cope with such material!"

"You wrote an excellent chronicle," Andrei said. "There's no need to belittle your own efforts like this."

The Sparrow looked at him attentively and, so it seemed to Andrei, with a touch of mockery.

"Thanks, Andryusha. I'm exceedingly grateful to you. But the point is that in three issues I have been able to publish only one truly serious article: 'On Executions', in No. 2. All the rest was rejected. Yes, disagreement has arisen, and it's serious. What am I to do? All right, I'll leave the paper and go off with Olga, to the south, for instance. Will you allow me to work among the young people?"

"No," the Janitor said, after a pause. "Probably not, Kolya."

"Because you are against the programme," Andrei said. "You are against the Assembly of the Land. What will you be saying to the young people?"

"Yes, that's true..." he nodded sadly. "I shall say what I think. That the Assembly of the Land is a Utopia, a dream, that will only do harm because it will give power to other enslavers, in another dress, with different epaulettes."

"But we believe that the Assembly will express the people's will," Andrei replied. "We believe that nine-tenths of it will be peasants, people who hold our views on the land."

"That's naive. You will have no other alternative but to enforce your views by decree."

"Any decrees that we pass will be only the formulation of unconscious popular feeling."

"Decreeing is a great risk. Centralisation and decrees—that is where our destruction lies."

"Not our destruction, but the sole possibility of winning through."

"Well, that means..." the Sparrow laughed and made a helpless gesture.

"It means that you, Kolya, cannot go south to work there in the name of the party."

After that they changed the subject. The Sparrow was depressed. Andrei felt sorry for him but it would have been impossible to act otherwise. They had, at last, found him a new flat, and he and Olga intended to move the next day. So they talked about that and the Janitor, as always, gave very good advice.

But three days later the Janitor wakened Andrei with the news that the printing press had been discovered! He had gone to Sapyorny early that morning and, following his usual practice, before entering the front door had stopped for a moment on the other side of the street and looked at the windows of the flat on the third floor to see if the "all clear" sign was there. The windows which faced the end of the neighbouring house, could be seen through a narrow gap. The occupants had always been so pleased with the position of their flat! There was not much light, but at least they didn't have people peering in; the brick wall in front of them prevented that. Not only was there no "all clear" sign. The windows were not even there; they had been ripped bodily out of the walls together with the frames. Fragments of glass lay on the ground. The yardmen

had cleared up the main rubbish, but there was still some left. Evidently the windows had been knocked out hurriedly, in the last few moments before the arrest—to throw things out and provide a warning. The Janitor was able to sum all this up in a second and walk on, realising that there was probably an ambush in the house. Only that evening did they get to know the details. The police had come at night, by the main entrance. Shots had been fired from the flat. Police officer Miller had called in a detachment of gendarmes from the barracks in Kirochnaya Street and they had mounted a proper siege. It had lasted some time and there had been shooting from both sides. The Birdie, that young lad who looked like a slim-necked monk, had shot himself; the others had been captured. Sonya Ivanova, it seemed, had been the most daring and had put up a stubborn resistance. And that was the end of it. What they had tried not to think of had happened.

In the afternoon, almost as soon as he heard the news from the Janitor, Andrei ran round to the Sparrows' new flat to tell them. They were both overwhelmed. Yet another miraculous escape! Olga, who was usually rather dry and sharp, could not restrain her tears.

"Goodness, what a terrible pity! Kolya, Sonya, all of them! And poor little Birdie.... Such a silent one.... No one ever got to know him properly."

Sonya Perovskaya's reaction was instantaneous, in the *Perovskaya spirit.*

"Are they in the fortress? We must think it out, there may be some way of rescuing them."

"That time has passed," Andrei said. "We used to try. Now it's a dead loss. They've learnt their lesson. But there is one possibility of which I have some hopes."

Yes, they believed in that possibility. A tremendous explosion. Russia shaken from end to end, chaos, a revolution. That might mean the salvation of all who were now in the fortress. But Sonya—when they were alone—suddenly said something that astonished Andrei.

"And only Sonya Ivanova, our dear Vanka, is now experiencing a strange kind of joy...."

"But why?" Andrei sounded puzzled.

"There was no life for her without Sasha Kvyatkovsky. Even the baby was no joy to her. I know, I saw her twice after

Sasha's arrest. That's why she went to such lengths and shot at the police. She was ready to die."

"But what she could do for the cause would have died with her."

"Yes, I know. But.... It's something very deep and womanish. You might not be able to understand."

"I'll try."

"It's not even joy, it's probably a kind of unconscious longing: to be united with him. You understand?" He took her in his arms. "Under one roof. Even if it's the roof of a prison."

Every day now brought them nearer not only to the execution of the tyrant, but to the salvation of their friends. By the end of the month Stepan had nevertheless managed to stock up nearly nine poods of dynamite. Now even Kibalchich, a trained explosives expert, who had studied the Winter Palace out of books and calculated the required charge mathematically, said it was enough. Andrei passed Stepan the fuse and a tube containing a special slow-burning mixture. It should, so Kibalchich said, take about twenty minutes to burn.

"Will you manage to get clear in twenty minutes?" Andrei wanted to know.

"I'll manage! That'll be just about *richtig,* just right, as the Germans say." Stepan had been excited and cheerful over the last few days. Now he, too, was eager to get it over. "I've timed it. It takes exactly sixteen minutes to reach Admiralty Square, where you are standing now."

After January 30th, they expected the explosion every day. Two things had to coincide: the tsar must be in the dining room and there must be no one else in the cellar. The tsar usually dined at six, sometimes a little earlier or a little later. Andrei had to be on duty in the square every day from a quarter past six, waiting for Stepan. The days of final strain began. The required conditions simply refused to coincide. Andrei was tortured by suspense and Stepan was a terrible sight. His cheerfulness had quite disappeared. He would come up scowling and mutter, "No chance" or "Nothing doing", and Andrei would not dare ask why. This went on for a week, till February 5th.

It was a dark day of driving snow. There were deep drifts on the roads. The horse-drawn trams could not move along some of the streets.

In the palace they were awaiting the arrival of Prince Alexander of Hessen-Darmstadt, the brother of the Empress, and his son Alexander of Battenberg, now Prince of Bulgaria. Dinner was to be at six, a family affair, in the Yellow Room of the reserve half of the palace. But the train had been held up by drifts and did not arrive until a quarter to six. Courtiers and servants were expecting the prince to arrive by the Saltykov entrance. Everyone was agitated because the tsar was intolerant of any delay. In addition, it could be felt that he was already irritated and wearied by the prospect of the forthcoming meeting. He had no liking for his brother-in-law. News was suddenly received that the prince, through somebody's carelessness, had arrived at the wrong entrance. The major-domo, Major-General Delsal, ran to the other half of the palace, where certain minor ceremonies had to be changed at the last minute. It was an awkward moment, he could imagine the tsar's frigid face, set in a withering smile. Meanwhile Alexander was waiting in his chambers for Prince Golitsyn to appear with news of the guests' arrival and was indeed—the courtiers' intuition had not deceived them—experiencing some annoyance. He had been suddenly assailed by the long-forgotten sentimentalities of some forty years ago. Yes, once there had been youth, dreams, his journey to Europe with Kavelin and Zhukovsky, the court at Darmstadt and a fifteen-year-old girl, who had overwhelmed him, slain him at once with an extraordinary romantic love in the spirit of Bürger, and her brother, Alex, tall, devoted to hunting, a fine marksman, and collector of coins. The girl became Empress Maria Aleksandrovna of Russia. Her brother joined the Russian Horseguards, rose to the rank of Major-General, then served the Austrians, fought unsuccessfully against the Prussians and had now finished just where he had begun—with the utter nonsense of coin collecting. The wretched fellow had only a few years ago sent a discription of his "Münzenkabinett", published in three volumes in Gratz. This impoverished German family had won fortune's favour quite by accident. By the mere whim of fate the chariot of history had rolled through Darmstadt and there had been youth, spring, entertainments in the castle, a Cossack uniform, and a fifteen-year-old freshness. Now that one-time girl, having born him eight children, lay in her bedroom, a hopelessly sick and rather ugly old woman tormented by attacks of asphyxia. Her life with all its many

joys and delightful, imperially bestowed pleasures was drawing to its close. At the family dinner table tonight, sad though it might be, the Empress would not be present. Her brother and nephew would put on their impenetrably sour *Hessian* faces when informed of the Empress's inability to attend. Yes, now he knew what had been nagging at him—the expectation of this *Hessian* sourness on the faces of her relatives. As though a certain person were to blame for the Empress's sickness. And, of course, all the latest tittle-tattle about Katya and her secret chambers in the palace would be passed on to them that very evening. God! If only they could understand and share a little of the suffering, the immense burden that he had to bear as father of Russia's millions. But this was something quite beyond them, beyond their small-town comprehension. On the contrary, they would be full of silent and pompous reproach.

The longer the delay in this numismatic general's arrival, the more irritable Alexander became. The dinner menu with its adornment of flowers and vignettes seemed foolish. Oysters? Ox-tail and tarragon? Pies? Ugh, how disgusting—pies! They took advantage of his preoccupation. Gatchina trout. Chicken chaud-froid. Lamb. Adlerberg's foolish taste for lamb. Mandarin punch. Nesselrode pudding. A menu always seemed foolish when people were late for dinner. He decided to keep this witticism for the conversation at table. He must have a dig at those thick Hessian thighs somehow. And just at the moment when he had begun to think about Shuvalov's memorandum of the day before yesterday concerning the struggle against nihilism, and his proposal that the editors should be summoned before the tsar, Prince Golitsyn appeared breathing heavily and announced in a loud voice, as if proclaiming the ressurection:

"His Highness, Prince Alexander of Hessen, has come from the station to the palace and awaits Your Majesty in the smaller Field Marshals' Hall."

The Emperor went to meet his guest.

Two minutes later, just as the united Russo-German *familie* was entering the dining hall, the world exploded, the lights went out, an icy horror descended and the Emperor died, but a second later he rose again—in utter darkness, amid the rumble of falling masonry, shouts and screams, and suffocating clouds of dust. He ran up the stairs to the princess's rooms, thinking that she had been killed, but Katya, alive, ran towards

him, crying out, "Sasha! Sashenka!" and they embraced in the darkness as they might have done in paradise in the first moment after death.

Andrei was walking up and down by the railings of the Alexander Gardens, waiting as usual at about twenty minutes past six for Stepan's tall figure to appear from the direction of the palace. He was somewhat overdue and Andrei was already tense with foreboding. Suddenly he saw Stepan. He was walking with his usual swinging stride but without any particular haste. Yes, he was walking, not running. It had seemed to Andrei that if *the thing had happened,* Stepan would be running, at least the last hundred paces, so this meant another failure and his excitement died. But as soon as he was close enough Stepan said very calmly, "It's done." Half a minute later came the thunder of the explosion. Both of them stopped as they were about to leave the Palace Square and looked back. The lights had gone out in the palace. Shouting could be heard. A few people ran across the square, which had suddenly become as dark as night. It was quite impossible at the moment to tell what *had happened* there or how it had happened. To wait would have been too dangerous. Andrei led Stepan to a cab driven by one of their men and they dashed off.

In the flat in Bolshaya Podyacheskaya Street, where refuge had been prepared for Stepan, he asked, "Are there any weapons? I'll not give myself up alive!"

There were enough weapons. Anya Yakimova, the girl from his home town, busied herself at the samovar and put some snacks on the table, but Stepan waved them aside.

"No tea for me! I've just had some. I don't want anything!"

His calm that had so surprised Andrei had vanished. Now he could neither sit still nor lie down. He went round and round the room in circles, telling and retelling the same thing—how the last few minutes before the explosion had passed. How he had had to try and stop them lighting the lamp and they, the devils, had been all for lighting it. And on top of that the stoveman Averyanov had come in and asked, "What are you sitting in the dark for?" It was hard to make sense of his story and they were all shaking with a wild, intoxicated excitement. They were thinking of something quite different. So, at last, this great lumbering waggon had been given a

mighty push! Surely this would overturn it! Tomorrow morning Russia would awaken from its slumber. Would there be a new Emperor? A new government? Or perhaps a republic? An Assembly of the Land?

Andrei was itching to be in the streets finding out just what had been destroyed under those ruins.

But Stepan went on and on about this stoveman Averyanov and the joiner Bogdanov, and how they had stayed in the cellar from five o'clock, drinking tea, and there had been no getting rid of them, chasing them off to their evening work, the devils, and another joiner Razumovsky, the nit, had kept on about lighting the lamp and Stepan had had to shout at him not to touch it because there was not enough oil in it and if he turned up the wick the glass would crack. And all the time he had been looking at his watch. It was half past five and still they wouldn't go. After all, it was their safety, he had been thinking of. Finally Bogdanov had left and so had Averyanov, but Razumovsky had wanted to get a hinge and lock for a casket he was making from the cupboard. Stepan had shouted at him again and lighted a stump of candle, but put it out at once because the light would only have brought in some more of the fools and that would have been the end of it. The family dinner with the German prince was to be at six. In the end, at about six Razumovsky had gone, but then someone else had come in and wanted to know if Petrotsky was at home. Petrotsky, the overseer, as it happened, was out....

Andrei slipped out to a secret address, where he might find Mikhailov. Life in Petersburg still seemed to be following its normal course. The snowstorm had stopped. The janitors were scraping the snow away, the shops were doing a brisk trade; from the restaurant came the strains of music. Rich carriages were parked in front of a theatre.

Mikhailov was in. He knew about the explosion, but nothing about the results. On a sofa at the back of the room sat Andrei Presnyakov in a black woollen jersey and top-boots; he was smoking. They had not seen each other since Alexandrovsk.

Presnyakov looked not at Andrei but through him with his motionlessly light, watery eyes.

"Now I won't be able to fix up my brother anywhere," he said. "Try to do something for him, Mitrich."

"Without fail," the Janitor replied. "I've made a note of it."

"Try through Grachevsky. He's got a friend who's a goldsmith."

"Don't worry. We'll find a job for your brother." And with a nod at Presnyakov the Janitor told Andrei, "Yesterday he executed the traitor Zharkov. On the ice of the Neva. So now he'll have to lie low like Stepan."

This had been the Janitor's idea—to kill a spy at the same time as the explosion in the Winter Palace. One half of the plan had succeeded. But what about the Emperor?

And only late that evening the news came from Kibalchich, who had connections with the newspapers, that the Emperor and all his family were alive. In the guardroom on the floor below eleven soldiers had been killed and there were about fifty injured, including some of the palace servants.

Stepan was crushed by the news. His face paled and he looked like death itself when Andrei came and told him at midnight. His energy drained out of him, he collapsed on the floor and lay there with his head in his hands. They picked him up and carried him to the bed. "I told you.... I'll never forgive Boris..." he moaned. The next morning Russia did not awaken from her slumbers. The Emperor was still the same. In the trams the people talked about the frost that seemed to be easing a little, about a famous medium who was in town, about the trotting races on the Neva, where Count Adlerberg's filly "Vengerka" had come in first. But in all eyes there was a gleam of fearful, secret curiosity. Everyone longed to get out of the tram and find somebody with whom they could share the news, learn something more, consult, express surprise, astonishment, admiration. Poor Count Adlerberg with his winning filly!

Chapter Six

The rumours, talk, surmises and perfectly authentic, first-hand news began to circulate. It was said, for example, that all the palaces were mined and would soon be blown sky-high. The Nevsky was also mined and they were waiting for a signal, either from Warsaw or Geneva, and as soon as that signal was given—bang! Many of the city's inhabitants who were in a position to do so moved out of the ill-fated capital into the country. It was said that the roads out of Petersburg had been

closed. People were being searched at the stations. They were looking for a peasant with a huge black beard, but the beard was a false one. Sometimes he went about without any beard, in gold-rimmed spectacles and a top-hat; so there was no way of telling. This peasant who, of course, was not a peasant at all, had worked in the royal palace as the chief supervisor and had been sent there by the Third Section, but he had fooled them all, on both sides, then set off the mine and that was that. All these and many other details Andrei heard in the taverns in the Sennaya, and the Gostinny Dvor. But more significant information also came his way.

Count Adlerberg, so Tigrych reported from some of his acquaintances, journalists in the legal field, had badly damaged his reputation by refusing to allow Gurko to make a proper police search of the palace. He had not wanted the Princess Dolgorukaya's secret chambers to be discovered. But the sketches found at Kvyatkovsky's with the suspicious-looking marks on them still gave cause for anxiety, so Gurko had called in Delsal and Chief of Police Komarov and thrust the mysterious diagram under their noses. As a soldier he had smelt a rat all along, but had not been able to awaken any real alarm. The search had been made by the special palace police, a lackadaisical, arrogant and irresponsible lot, and this was the result. The hero of the Balkans had lost his governorship. But the full force of the monarchical wrath had descended on the Third Section. Clearly the fate of that institution was sealed. According to some reports that had leaked out of the palace the Emperor, crushed and confused, and assailed by constant attacks of asthma, was holding incessant conferences with the senior members of his court, ministers and the governors-general, who had been called to the capital from other cities. The governor-general of Kharkov, Count Loris-Melikov, had, so it was said, shown the greatest presence of mind, and while the other courtiers in their panic could only mutter meaningless phrases he had put forward a programme for unifying the administrative power. An institution with the widest powers should be set up and placed in the hands of one man. The Emperor, so it was said, had suddenly come to life, emerged from his gloomy torpor and, pointing at the Armenian count, had said, "You shall be that man!" Thus was the Supreme Administrative Commission established with Loris-Melikov at its head.

Strange days! Despondency reigned in the party. The loss of their printing press, the arrests of their best members, the failure of the explosion. But there was no rejoicing in the enemy camp either. If the revolutionaries could run the palace as if it were their own, then who was the master of the country? Who was the true Emperor—Alexander II or the Executive Committee?

One week passed, then another, and the foreign newspapers arrived with detailed accounts of the events in Russia, with pictures of the panic and horror that had seized the highest officials of Petersburg, and soon it became apparent that there was no reason for despondency. Andrei told Stepan, who was still badly depressed, that the failure of the palace explosion was in reality a tremendous success that had astonished the world. They showed Stepan the papers. He cheered up a little. Excited talk about the Executive Committee was to be heard in the streets. People were saying there was nothing it could not do. And from foreign lands came the comment of Georges Plekhanov, their unyielding opponent, who had left Russia in January: "To have caught the eye of the world—does this not already mean victory?"

"No, it does not mean victory—far from it," Andrei said at a meeting of the Committee. He was perhaps the only one present who did not share their joy that the leader of the Chorny Peredel, the Land-Sharers, had conceded such admiration. "Because the job has got to be finished. And what our much-esteemed Georges is really saying in his admiring acknowledgement is that we should stop! Stop! You have won already! No, gentlemen, we are only on the road to victory and we must not stop on any account."

And yet nothing could cure their disappointment. To have prepared for so long and with such care, to have surmounted so many difficulties, to have displayed such superhuman endurance....

It was decided to start preparations for another attempt on the tsar's life. This time it was to be made in Odessa, where the tsar would stop on his way to his summer residence at Livadia. To Vera Figner in Odessa they sent Sablin, who would be joined a little later by Sonya Perovskaya and technician Isayev. The circle of fighters was shrinking; some had perished, others had left the country. Not long before the Winter Palace blast Morozov and Olga Lyubatovich had gone

abroad. Andrei had seen them off. He had felt friendly towards the Sparrow ever since the Big Trial. He was impressed by the courage this young man of such feeble appearance had shown in breaking with his family background of wealth and aristocracy. Evidently it was part of his character, this firmness in parting. How else could their problem have been solved? Andrei had urged them to change their minds, but without conviction, realising it was no use. No concessions could be made for they were not prepared to accept a third-rate role. The Sparrow spoke with contempt of Mikhailo's proposal that he should make seals. A fine "mission" for a terrorist! Who, he wondered, had conceived that brilliant idea? Andrei told him they had better hurry. They must leave before the explosion, which was due any day now. They left in time.

In Kronstadt there was a house to which Andrei had often been invited and, so it seemed, quite sincerely and with all due hospitality. This was the house of Sergei Degayev, a retired artillery officer. Andrei had met Degayev the previous autumn, through the family of Nikolai Sukhanov, a naval officer he had visited almost as soon as he returned from Aleksandrovsk to Petersburg because Sukhanov's sister, Olga Yevgenyevna Zotova, was married to a man who had been a good friend of Andrei's in Odessa and the Crimea—Kolya Zotov. That was how this acquaintanceship, a most important one, had sprung up. When Andrei was still in Odessa a year ago—only one year! And it seemed like ten because life, *his* life, had changed so much!—he had realised that you wouldn't get anywhere without the military if it was really an uprising you were thinking about. Without their experience, their discipline, their weapons.

Then, at the end of November, Nikolai Sukhanov had not been the kind of convinced revolutionary ready for anything that he was now. Then he had been simply an embittered man, disillusioned with his career and the future. He had recently returned from the Far East, where he had served for several years as an officer in the Siberian flotilla. In his last year he had been made an inspector of accounts on one of the ships and had come face to face with monstrous infringements of regulations and embezzlement. During their foreign cruises the com-

manders and senior engineers, and the inspectors as well, had become accustomed to amassing vast fortunes. By falsifying their accounts and the listed prices of coal—this was done with the connivance of consuls and contractors, who of course also received their share—they made money hand over fist. Sukhanov had refused to sign a fictitious receipt. The ship's captain had threatened him, and the senior engineers had promised to throw him overboard with a stone round his neck. Sukhanov persisted. The matter was taken to court. During the hearing of the case, the other captains, who made as much out of coal as their colleague, tried to cover up for him but were nevertheless compelled to remove him temporarily from his command, while Sukhanov, picked on over a mere formality, lost his promotion.

He arrived in Petersburg, bitterly angry and insulted, and in this state of mind—cursing the service whenever it was mentioned!—met Andrei. It was not hard to explain that the corruption and embezzlement that flourished in the Siberian flotilla were only a small part of the general picture of decay. The same thievery and venality, the same ganging up of the worst people and victimisation of the best prevailed everywhere, in the army, the ministries, the courts, and the local government authorities. Midshipman Lutsky, who had been a volunteer in the Serbian campaign, described the way things had been run in the "Army of Liberation". The quartermasters practised daylight robbery and it was no good protesting. This was nothing new. All Russia was talking about it. But what could be done? How could all this be changed, so that honest people could live honestly? In Siberia Sukhanov had got to know some of the political exiles. Even in his youth, at naval college, he had belonged to a "whaling society", which had vague inclinations towards revolution or, at least, some kind of radical reform based on the principles of reason.

Sukhanov was tall, fair and well built, and had that special charm of the kind and gentle person who is nevertheless adamant in some things. He had, it seemed, taken a liking to Andrei at once. Andrei was not surprised. He knew he had the ability to please. But only people of a certain kind. There were others—and of this he was also well aware—who without for a moment suspecting what he really was took an immediate, intuitive dislike to him. Sukhanov was a generally attractive personality.

People with a heightened sense of conscience always gather others round them, involuntarily, according to the strange laws of human magnetism.

"What shall we do?" one of the guests would ask when he came in shivering from the frost to the warm flat, where the candles were always burning brightly, someone was playing the piano, someone else pouring out the Scottish drink of the sea, and there was a smell of cigars.

"What shall we do? Write a constitution!" Sukhanov would say.

And amid general laughter he would produce paper and pencil. This was a joke, but it was becoming a little tiresome; the paper was for keeping the score at cards. On one of the first evenings, between the hands of whist, the drinks and the youthful banter—the guests included two young ladies, friends of Olga's from the conservatoire—the talk suddenly took a serious turn. The sailors began to complain of the hardships of an officer's life, of the overbearing ways and insulting tone adopted by the senior officers. A junior officer had shot one of his superiors and been sentenced to penal servitude, another had been driven to suicide. But the main trouble was in the material sphere. The salary was not enough to meet even the most essential needs. All four of the young naval men who were in the room, it turned out, were in debt. But how else could they manage? The mere care of an officer's kit cost from one hundred and fifty to two hundred rubles a year. And where was he to get such a sum? What a strange country Russia is, Andrei thought as he listened to these confessions. It was late and the ladies had left; someone had gone to see them home. An astonishing country! One third of the budget was spent on the armed services, the backbone of the country. Everything depended on them, on these men who had been trained to serve from childhood, and if even they were dissatisfied.... Who then had a good life in Russia? The poet had been right to ponder that riddle. It was incomprehensible. Even the tsar, it seemed, did not enjoy life very much, when he could be blown up in his own home and would one day be blown to bits—that was now quite certain.

The sailors began to talk of revolutionary matters. Their ideas on the subject were extremely vague, no clearer than in other uncommitted circles, but these affairs and the mysterious figures involved seemed to interest them. When introducing

Andrei, Sukhanov had hinted that Chernyavsky—the name Andrei had adopted—had some connection with *those* people. One of the officers asked, "What do these gentlemen actually want?" And Andrei then delivered a lecture, his first to them, on the meaning of social ideas and "what these gentlemen actually want". He was listened to with attention but, he noticed, without any particular enthusiasm. There must have been something he had missed. He had failed to strike the right note. He had talked about the things he usually discussed with the workers and students, about the need to throw off "moral oppression and slavery". But these officers, dissatisfied though they were, did not feel themselves to be slaves. And there was yet another thing. Sukhanov said to Andrei when the others had left and they were alone, "You tried to tempt them with better prospects for themselves personally. That's not exactly the thing to fire their imagination. You must understand that all of us, of the aristocratic tribe, are rather romantic. And although we complain and grumble and are wallowing in debt, the only thing that can set us on fire is self-sacrifice!"

Later they had another gathering at Sukhanov's flat. Andrei went with Kolodkevich. Sukhanov had told his guests in advance that he was expecting some "very good people". Many naval men came, about fifteen in all. This was by no means such a spontaneous and apparently accidental affair as the first occasion. Now it was all in the open, in crisp, military style. After a few minutes of general conversation Sukhanov rose suddenly and addressed the whole company.

"Gentlemen, this room has two main walls and two others that back on to rooms in my own flat. My orderly is a Tatar and hardly understands a word of Russian. So we have nothing to fear from impudent ears and can get straight down to business." And then to Andrei, "Well, Andrei, fire ahead!"

In the course of a few weeks they had adopted the familiar forms of address. Sukhanov now knew that his real name was Zhelyabov. But, as in all military men, his dislike of conspiracy was deep-rooted. He could not hide or make a mystery of things, did not like doing so and inwardly felt there was something indecent about it. They had clashed over this subject already. And here he was calling him first Boris, then Taras, then Andrei. Zhelyabov stood up and began talking quite simply, as if of something quite ordinary and everyday.

"Well, gentlemen, if you are interested in what Nikolai

Yevgenyevich calls the programme and activities of our party, allow me to tell you about them. We are revolutionary terrorists and we demand the following...."

At the words "revolutionary terrorists" a truly sepulchral silence descended on the room. Everyone stared at Andrei in astonishment and some looked rather dismayed. He realised that most of the company had not expected such categorical definitions from "very good people". One young midshipman made a sudden movement as if to get up, but remained seated. Andrei let them have it straight. He felt a sudden reckless inner strength, the force of spirit that comes to a man who thinks nothing of the consequences, whose speech is guided not by reason and logic but by daring and truth. What did he talk about? About Russia's ills. About the only way the Russians had of surviving and winning through. He spoke of the might of the party that had made its watchword the will of the people. Of its tremendous possibilities, its connections in society, its subsections in other cities, its friends abroad, of its unshakeable confidence that very soon—incredibly soon, it would be better not to say how soon, because he might not be believed—everything in Russia would be radically changed.

It was probably madness to say these things to people in uniform, most of them strangers, who were staring at him in astonishment. But Andrei could not stop. He was carried away, as he had been at times in his youth, at the student gatherings in Odessa, which usually ended in brawls. And if they did raise any objections, he would speak even more bluntly. He would tell them that the supreme slavery was to serve a system that you believed to be unjust, and that all of them wearing the uniform of the Russian service must answer for the delights of autocracy, for the banishments, the mines, for Chernyshevsky, for the Poles.... But the sailors did not object. They listened in silence. By their faces he could see that something inside, in their eyes, was irresistibly changing. He felt that his inspiration, his fervour was flowing into them. They were not the same people that had sat here an hour ago gossiping, telling funny stories, and arguing about the vocal and other merits of Madame Renalles. Once again he felt the sweet sensation of power that he already knew so well. He was sure that if he were to shout now, "Out with your knives!" or "Break into the armoury and take the weapons!" or even "Weigh anchors and put out into the Neva!" they would rise as

one man and follow him at that moment. But in an another hour or two, when the meeting was over, the headiness would subside, their blood cool, the gleam die out of their eyes and they would go back—not to Madame Renalles', perhaps, but to their debts and fiancées, to their impoverished mothers in out-of-the-way villages, and to fears of loss, demotion, of perishing in the struggle for existence.

And only a few of them, like Kolya Sukhanov, whose cheeks were flushed and burning....

Yes, there were a few that Andrei's keen eye had spotted: Karabanovich, who lived in Sukhanov's flat, Zavalishin, Serebryakov, Yung, and the young artilleryman Degayev. These, it seemed, were to be counted upon. When a general discussion—on the programme—began, they confessed with surprise that they had never expected the revolutionaries to be demanding a Constituent Assembly and nationalisation of the land. They had assumed that revolutionaries were only destroyers. Of course! Nothing better than enraged gorillas.

"If it wasn't for the point about terrorism," one of the sailors said, "I would subscribe to your programme right away."

And this, it seemed, was the general opinion that evening.

Sukhanov was delighted with Andrei's speech and the impression he had made on the sailors. He promised that at the next meeting they would recruit three hundred of the Kronstadt officers for the party. Andrei cooled him down. It would be splendid if they got thirty. Of those who had displayed such fervour that evening and wanted to subscribe to the programme had many sought out Sukhanov later or asked for another instalment? About three in all, with a possible fourth. It was only what Andrei had expected. Winning people's hearts was a slow business. Words, even the most ardent, were effective only at short range, like old muskets. There had to be shocks, explosions.

After the explosion in the palace Andrei went out to Kronstadt with Sonya, the Purring Cat and Anya Korba. It was the middle of February and the snowstorms were as bad as ever. The train crawled along, stopping while the railwaymen cleared the line. But in Odessa now the weather was warm and dry. People were strolling about without their coats and Sonya would be going there in a few days. Andrei and the Purring Cat, both Odessa men, kept her entertained with recollections, jokes and advice. Kolodkevich with his great thick beard,

black hair and flashing deep-blue eyes, told Odessa stories with an accent and looked like a real Jewish innkeeper. They were laughing and in high spirits. Their companion in the compartment, an official in an expensive fur coat, gave them some severe looks; either he disapproved of the mockery of the accent or had decided that his carriage companions were indeed of another race and behaving far too freely. Actually they were on their way to see Sergei Degayev. This twenty-two-year-old staff captain of artillery, now retired, had since autumn grown fervently attached to Sukhanov and his visitors from Petersburg and it looked as if he had serious intentions of becoming a revolutionary. Andrei was not entirely open with him and felt more at ease with Sukhanov. But Degayev had been entrusted with minor tasks and had always carried them out with the greatest zeal. Andrei had told him to work up connections with the Petersburg artillerymen and student circles. In winter Degayev had arrived in Kronstadt from Kharkov with his whole family: mother, two sisters, the elder married, and his younger brother. He was eager to introduce his family to his new friends, whom he obviously worshiped (he had once told Andrei that if he ever met Morozov he would take him in his arms and kiss him) and began to invite Andrei and the others to his home. They were busy and the visit had to be postponed more than once. Degayev began to take offence and when Andrei met him in the street after the Winter Palace explosion he bowed in a dry, formal manner.

"I congratulate you on your global success! Naturally you have no time to visit a mere retired staff captain burning with useless sympathy for your cause."

Andrei made some lame excuse. He was embarrassed. Degayev had a kind of shallow face scored with premature wrinkles and his lips were pale and tightly pursed.

"If you would rather not, or cannot spare the time, say so straight out. Otherwise I shall have to conclude that you wish to avoid my house!"

There was a noticeable stress on the word "avoid" and Andrei realised that the man was bitterly insulted. But why repel his advances? They decided to go on their first free Sunday, especially as Andrei had something to see Sukhanov about. He thought it was time the sailors were urged to organise. The women and Kolodkevich went to Degayev's flat, Andrei said that he would come later.

Andrei had already tackled Sukhanov about forming a revolutionary organisation—not just for discussion but for action—among the naval officers. Sukhanov had agreed but kept putting it off on the grounds that there were several points that did not suit everybody. Centralisation, strict discipline—they had had enough of that in the service—and secret killings. In a word, conspiracy. An open struggle, barricades, an uprising would be far more attractive. Andrei recognised his own doubts of eighteen months before.

"I have every respect for what you did in the palace," Sukhanov whispered. Olga, his sister, could not hear because she was talking to a guest in the next room. "In itself it's a splendid act. But, in the first place, you killed innocent people. And secondly," Sukhanov's face creased into a suffering frown, "you must agree that secret preparations for murder savour rather of Caesar Borgia...."

"Just a moment. You talk of an uprising, but how do you intend to bring it about?"

"That I don't yet know."

"But we do know. If the tsar was blown up, it would also explode the idea of the tsar's power being ordained by God, and among the people, unfortunately, there is nothing stronger or more lasting than this idea. So the ensuing chaos might lead to an uprising."

Sukhanov fell into a thoughtful silence. Andrei knew that any change in this man would occur quickly. It had been the same with him. Sukhanov's sister, Olga, with a naval officer unknown to Andrei, appeared from the next room. The officer was introduced as Baron Stromberg. Andrei had heard about him from Sukhanov. Slim, clear-eyed, with a forked ginger beard, rather like a German pastor in appearance, the lieutenant had only just arrived from the Far East. But he had already heard about Andrei.

As he shook hands, he said derisively, "God knows what is going on here! Bomb explosions, illegal gatherings, arguments about the French revolution. You must be mad? At a moment like this, when the empire is bracing all its strength for the fight against our inveterate enemies, the Turks, internal and external...." And changing suddenly to a serious tone, "It's high time to write the rules and programme for our circle."

Sukhanov and Andrei burst out laughing.

"It's disgraceful the amount of subversive talk he's picked

up from those political exiles!" Sukhanov said, nudging Stromberg jokingly. "No, gentlemen, there's no point in starting anything before autumn. In March, we shall be preparing for sea, then a cruise of six months, and we'll be back in October and then...."

And then you may be too late, Andrei thought to himself.

Autumn seemed an incredible distance away; they would be lucky if they lived that long. Stromberg talked about his experiences in Siberia, his meetings with the Polish exiles. It was interesting, but they were likely getting uneasy at the Degayevs and Sonya was there; he would have to go. Sukhanov's sister, who was pregnant and looked ill, declined the invitation. "Sergei Petrovich," she said, "is a most boring gentleman and one can talk about nothing with his ladies except hats." Sukhanov and Stromberg also decided to stay at home. The atmosphere in this house—not only because of Olga's difficult pregnancy, but also of her premonitions and fears for her brother's safety, and the lack of any news about her husband, who was having a hard time somewhere in Siberia—was not a happy one. They tried to dissuade Andrei from going to Degayev's.

"Why are you so set on this visit. Have you never seen tea before? They make a very weak brew, but we'll give you some proper, English tea," Olga said jokingly. "Mark my words. Degayev's mother is a terrible fool, proud though she is of being the daughter of the writer Polevoi."

"Sergei's not a bad fellow, but so fussy," Sukhanov said. "He tires me out."

This was all quite true, but Degayev had taken a step. He had resigned his commission early in order to devote more time to revolutionary matters. And his work among the students, and particularly among the Petersburg artillerymen, had obviously been useful. But it was true there was something, perhaps this fussiness, a kind of nervous instability of mind—Andrei could sense it—that prevented any close relationship. It was something of a mystery, of course, that he should be so persistent in inviting them. And why take offence when people had no time for visiting? Still, he had to go. Andrei took his leave. Sukhanov came out into the hall to see him off.

"When will you come again? I'll invite some people round."

"Now, look here, Kolya. You will invite everybody, but

you've got to drop this Cossack parliament kind of thing—otherwise we'll run into trouble, I've already been told off about it by Kolodkevich."

"There are no traitors among the people of my acquaintance!" Sukhanov said, flushing. "Treachery is not the kind of thing sailors go in for. What I say is, if he's a good man, let him come and listen. We can't demand a captain's reference, can we?"

"You divide people into good and bad, heroes and traitors. But there are any number of shades between light and darkness, aren't there? So mark this, my dear friend. It's those shades of difference that are taking toll of us."

It was past eight in the evening and pitch dark. The chemist's shop in Degayev's house with its gas-illuminated sign—the landmark he had been told to look out for—was closed and the lantern extinguished, and Andrei spent a long time wandering about the deserted side-street. It was a district of echoing granite, dead and damp. He burst into some sort of doss-house with about twenty people stretched out on the floor; an old man was praying before the icon and someone shouted when Andrei opened the door, "Heh, stop!" After that he found himself in a workshop where children were working by the light of oil lamps, cutting something on low tables. The place smelled of alum. Finally, he reached Degayev's flat and there was Sonya; she was out in the corridor to open the door for him before her hosts.

"Why were you so long?"

"Stromberg was there, we were talking."

Sonya, as always when she was worried, had white patches under the eyes; her high colour suddenly disappeared in spots.

"Sergei says the police make raids at night. The night before last all the hotels and doss-houses were searched."

"Well, how goes it?" he asked in a whisper, putting his arm round her shoulders.

"Deadly dull..." she managed to whisper, but then Degayev appeared in the corridor in a gaily checked frock-coat and white shirt with a splendid tie of the latest fashion. His face was flushed and he was noticeably tipsy.

Andrei was suddenly reminded of the old days in Odessa and he felt something lurch painfully in his chest. Degayev's mother with her air of an official's wife straining to be hospitable, the pies, the home-made biscuits, one of Degayev's sis-

ters at the piano, the other, in an extravagant dress—he had seen them in Odessa, on Olga's friends—singing song after song with such persistence. The "Golden Fish", the "Swallow", Schubert.... And after this she recited Schiller and Krylov. Anya Korba and Sonya, as connoisseurs of the theatre, made tactful comments. The younger sister, who closely resembled her brother, with the same shallow, insignificant face, very small and with short arms, played pieces on the piano in the intervals between the singing and recitation. Andrei could not concentrate. It had been the same when Olga had sung. But Olga had had a voice! Andrei's thoughts were occupied with the naval men. A cruise of five months would disrupt all their plans. But there was no point in their resigning like Degayev. They must be on the ships, among the crews, because the warships on the day of the uprising could be a decisive force. The task of the moment was to draw the officers into the movement. The members of the Land and Freedom movement and the *Chorny Peredel* had also tried to penetrate the naval establishments, but they had tackled the lower deck, which had been a weakness on their part. You could propagandise for two hundred years there and not get any further. People like Sukhanov and Stromberg were worth a whole crew. They would rouse the men and lead them. Eventually, from the general conversation it transpired that Degayev's elder sister, also rather plain, but of a different type, with a large nose and self-assured manners, had set her heart on becoming an actress. The move from Kharkov to the capital had apparently been connected with this dream. Could they not help her in some way? "You people have such widespread connections!" Sonya smiled and shrugged in perplexity.

"What special connections have we?"

"Oh, don't say such things!" Degayev's mother, embarrassed and delighted at the same time, waved her hand at Sonya and whispered, "We know what kind they are! But that is not for us, heaven forbid...."

"What do you mean?"

"Maman, you are pressing our guest too far," Degayev said. "Of course, our friends have no mysterious connections whatever. Something in the papers, the magazines—that's nothing."

That was an allusion to Tigrych, who wrote under the pen-name of Koltsov in *Dyelo,* and to Kibalchich, who wrote for *Slovo.* It would have been amusing if they had undertaken to

promote this songstress with the big nose. His mother at once declared that she herself had enough contacts in the literary world. After all, she was the daughter of Nikolai Polevoi, the publisher of the *Moscow Telegraph,* and the sister of Pyotr Polevoi, a professor. Her father had been considered a Jacobin. And her grandfather (on her father's side) had been a merchant, the owner of a faience factory in Irkutsk, a man of humble origins.

As he listened to this strange talk and ate the biscuits and other dainties, Andrei reflected that it was a waste of time. But why had they been invited? Degayev's mother seemed sincerely glad to have them here; the gratified and almost beseeching smile never left her heavy, ill-shapen face, the battered face of an ageing and impoverished widow. Degayev's younger brother frowned all the time and said nothing. Degayev himself fussed about continually, making efforts to entertain, telling stories, breaking off suddenly and pressing food on his guests. But Andrei had a feeling that his host was waiting for a chance to say something important. Eventually the moment came and he whispered, "I am so glad you found the time to come and see us. Mother is terribly pleased. I haven't seen her like this for months...."

When they came out into the pitch darkness of the street—it was too late to go to Petersburg and they had decided to spend the night at Sukhanov's in his large flat—Andrei said to Sonya, "At last I've realised why they made such a point of our coming and gave us such a feast. We are celebrities, generals. This family always has to be proud of something—its father, its uncles, the *Moscow Telegraph,* its vocal abilities. Now it will preen itself on its famous friends. Isn't that so?" He laughed with satisfaction at his own insight and at something else, quite a lot of things, in fact, but Sonya pressed his hand in the darkness.

"Personally I don't like your Sergei Degayev," she said suddenly, and gave a little laugh as if she had made some unexpectedly foolish remark that she herself found amusing. "I don't quite know why. Don't pay any attention. It's like that with me sometimes. I sense something like a dog, but I can't explain it."

Petersburg was preparing to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Alexander's reign. The preparations were going ahead in an

anxious, muddled fashion, accompanied by rumours, hopes and fears. It was said that for February the 19th, Jubilee Day, the revolutionaries had concocted a grand *surprise*. The tsar dared not leave the palace, even to go to the Kazan Cathedral. It was said that Loris was drafting some splendid reforms. An era of unprecedented liberalisation was about to dawn. All the land would be handed over to the peasants, the censorship would be abolished, the Third Section closed down. It was even possible that the Assembly of the Land would be convoked! But another version was also being passed around. Loris was supposed to have said to Suvorin, "Please, don't talk about freedom and the constitution, I am not here to provide anything of the kind and don't put me in an invidious position." Rumours of imminent insurrection were persistent and the janitors advised tenants to lay in a stock of water and candles because the water and gas mains would be blown up during the uprising.

Finally, some benefits were discovered in the Jubilee. The workers were to be given a three-day holiday without loss of pay. The beflagged and illuminated city—all householders had been told to keep two candles burning in each window—was thronged with excited and slightly tipsy crowds, and several thousand people were crammed round the palace to stare at the uniforms of the generals and courtiers, the ladies' dresses and the glittering carriages. Two days before the 19th, Mikhailov told Andrei that a certain individual, quite unknown, had turned up in the capital and wanted to spoil the celebrations by making an attempt on the newly appointed dictator. He had asked for no help. But perhaps some help should be given? They held a quick conference and decided that he should act as Solovyov had done, at his own risk. This was a time of uncertainty, the public was in an agitated mood and there were vague hopes. What direction would Loris take? So it would be better for the party to bide its time. After all, the appointment of Loris-Melikov, the conqueror of Kars, victor over the plague on the Lower Volga, an energetic administrator and, so rumour had it, a man of moderate views, a crypto-liberal, indicated in a sense a retreat by the Emperor under pressure from left-wing forces. Only recently there had been the count's appeal "To the People of the Capital", a calm enough message with hidden liberal implications—people read between the lines—that seemed to put its main hopes on

"public support". Actually it had all happened before! The same kind of appeals and the same kind of hopes. And yet, in the salons, the drawing rooms, in the editorial offices and even in government departments the incorrigible believers in gradual progress were buzzing about the winds of change....

On February 20th, at two in the afternoon, a young man—it later became known that his name was Ippolit Mlodetsky, a citizen of the lower middle class from the town of Slutsk—waylaid Loris-Melikov outside his mansion just as the count was stepping out of his carriage, and fired a shot. There were two sentries on guard at the entrance as well as the mounted Cossacks who had been escorting the carriage, and a policeman was close by. The count fell but sprang to his feet at once, hurled himself boldly at the attacker and knocked him down. The Cossacks closed in and grabbed him. The investigation was completed the same evening and the trial was to be held the next day. Everything was done energetically, in the new, business-like fashion. (In the heat of the moment Loris had contemplated hanging the fellow at once, without trial, as in time of war or, perhaps, during a plague epidemic.) Petersburg was bubbling with admiration for the count (he had fought back and knocked the man down!) and with indignation against the terrorists that was mingled with a kind of mystical fear—there was no counting them!

At the flat in Bolshaya Podyacheskaya they argued all night. How should they act? The Janitor, who had maintained beforehand that the party should support Mlodetsky or at least provide him with means of escape, now said, "It's a failure because we didn't help." But Andrei held that the outcome was as good as it could have been. Killing would have been premature. Loris had not yet shown his teeth, but there was no doubt that he would. Every execution must come at the right time. There must be an open declaration explaining that the party had not been involved, and this would make the authorities even more apprehensive.

The next day, February 21st, Petersburg was talking of nothing but Mlodetsky and his trial. It was clear what the outcome would be—the death penalty. It became known that during the hearing Mlodetsky had behaved defiantly, refused to answer questions, and accepted the sentence—the scaffold—with indifference. That evening Tigrych came and told them that the atmosphere in the editorial offices of the maga-

zines was one of great excitement. They were treating the forthcoming execution as a matter of crucial importance and trying to guess how it would influence Loris's policy and what the revolutionaries' answer would be.

"I noticed that these liberal gentlemen were very anxious for us to answer," Tigrych said with a subdued laugh.

"Yes, I'm sure they would applaud us in their nice warm toilets," Andrei said.

They decided to answer verbally. The next day, when it had been announced that the execution was to take place, Tigrych again brought news gleaned from some of the journalists that the writer Garshin, a volunteer of the Bulgarian campaign, had gone to see Loris-Melikov at home almost at daybreak and begged him to forgive and pardon Mlodetsky. The dictator was said to have made some promise to Garshin, whose action was absurd in itself, if not quite mad! But apparently the sentence had already received supreme approval. Andrei was among the crowd in Znamenskaya Street when Mlodetsky was taken from the fortress to the Semyonovsky Square, a journey right across the city. The brief minute, while the condemned man was being driven past and Andrei was able to peer into his sunken face with its rather set and arrogant smile—it was white as candle wax, almost dead already—was enough for him to see and understand everything. Suddenly he *saw himself* in this erect figure, in these glances cast abnegatedly and contemptuously at the crowd below. The people stood in a state of sullen torpor. The holiday had been spoilt, a fact that pleased no one. In any case no one could understand what was going on. Who were they shooting at? And what for? The count had only just been appointed, he had presented no definite image to the public, and for some reason he was already in the line of fire. Somebody must have got wind of something. They wouldn't have done it just for nothing. A woman standing beside Andrei crossed herself unobtrusively and whispered, "Lord, save Thy people...."

And somebody else, the writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky, suddenly *saw himself*—not in the future, near or distant, but in the past, a past that was almost forgotten but would never be forgotten entirely—in the tall figure of Mlodetsky on that damp February day. Two days before, when the attempt had

been made but nothing was as yet known about it, Suvorin had come to see him and the conversation had turned to this very subject of attempted assassinations. They had known nothing of the most recent attempt, but the horror evoked by the palace explosion had not dispersed. He had only just got over one of his fits and he was experiencing that sense of release, restfulness and return to life than which there is nothing sweeter on this earth. Unless, perhaps, it was the moment before an attack; that was even sweeter, even more poignant, but that was a moment of bliss that Mohammed had called the bliss of paradise itself. And as always after an attack, he felt hot, his face was streaming with sweat, and he looked like a man who had just come from the bath-house, straight off the hot shelf.

People were always astonished to see him in this perspiring state. Suvorin was also surprised and he had to explain. Yes, he had just been ill, a quarter of an hour ago. Anya received the guest coldly—she did not like people coming and disturbing him after the fits—but, oh God, would they never understand that this was the moment when he was stronger, healthier, happier and more lucid than the healthiest of men!

Suvorin was pleasant, like all people who are alive and changing. A man should change, he should always be going somewhere, turning into something else. Incidentally, it was the same with society. And it was then, two days ago, when he had been making his cigarettes and thinking why such things happened and there was still no end in sight, that this thought had occurred to him. Society was not only indifferent; it had actually evolved a special, inverted kind of attitude towards terror, assassinations and all this devilry. Ah, that old word—devilry! Everything had now become far more involved and more frightening. You could not grasp it, take it in your stride as it had seemed you could at one time, nine years ago.

"Just imagine, Alexei Sergeyevich," he began telling Suvorin, "that you and I are standing outside the windows of Datsiaro's shop and are looking at the pictures there. Beside us there stands a man who is pretending to be looking at them. He is expecting something and keeps glancing over his shoulder. Suddenly another man hurries up to him and says, 'In a moment the Winter Palace will be blown up. I've set it off.' We hear him say this. How would we act? Would we rush to the

Winter Palace to warn them of the danger or report it to the police, to the policeman on duty, so that he could arrest these men? Would you?"

Suvorin said no, he would not. And that was the whole point. That was the horror of it. It was a crime. We could perhaps have given warning. So he went on packing tobacco into those cardboard holders and thinking over the reasons in favour of doing so—serious reasons, of the highest order, of state importance and Christian duty. And the other reasons that would not permit him to do so. These were perfectly trivial. Simply the fear of being called an informer. He imagined the reception he would be given if he did report the matter, the questions he would be asked. He would have to identify these people or he might be offered a reward, or perhaps they would suspect him of being an accomplice? They would write about it in the papers: Dostoyevsky denounces the criminals. Was that his affair? Such things were for the police to do. That was what they were there for, what they were paid for. As for the liberals, they would never forgive him. They would torment him, drive him to distraction. But was that normal? Nothing was normal in this country, and that was why these things happened, and nobody knew how to act not only in the most difficult circumstances, but even in the simplest of situations....

And that evening his wife had come in with news of another attack by the terrorists. No one had been killed or even wounded, but there had been an attempt to kill and the criminal had been caught. The news had left him strangely depressed. Today the execution was to take place in Semyonovsky Square. Only the day before he had been reading his work in the Kolomenskaya girls high school, at Weinberg's request. An excerpt from *The Karamazovs.* It had been such a joy, he had felt such elation; those understanding faces, the tears, the gratitude, they wouldn't let him go, the discussion about Christ, and yet somewhere behind all this, in the background, was the inescapable thought: *tomorrow a life will be taken.* There, in that same square. And he could not resist it. He went off without telling anyone, because this was not only the thirst of memory but also a need to see, to share and to understand. Crime and punishment was really crime and suffering. And even more truly, it was suffering and suffering. The Semyonovsky Square was just as desolate, limitless,

white with snow as it had been then in December, thirty years ago. But then there had been a great deal of snow, it had been thick upon the ground, and when they were ordered out of the carriages they had jumped straight into it, and into that frost, an unbelievable frost, and they were all dressed in light, spring clothes, the ones they had been wearing at the time of their arrest in April. The sun had been a scarlet brand smouldering in the mist. Floundering in that deep snow they had marched to the middle of the square, where there had been a sort of square wooden structure covered with black drapes. At that moment none of them could have imagined that death was about to occur, they could not even think. They walked as in a dream, past the long lines of troops drawn up round the scaffold. Suddenly they saw the posts on the scaffold, then there was a long pause, hats off, the frost gripping the very heart, that murderous frost, it was unendurable—would the reading of the sentence never end?—legs giving way, and then the words: "All to suffer the penalty of death—by shooting." It was shattering, like death itself. The priest called them to confession, to kiss the cross, but no one could take a single step....

The criminal was tall, with an opaquely white, long narrow face. He bowed to all sides, bidding farewell to the people. There was a kind of inhuman calm in the figure he presented, and this was terrifying. More terrifying than anything else. Because one could sense that this was what the man had wanted, this was why he could be calm. For this suffering—in order to bow like this in the moment before death, in a public square before a silent crowd—this was what the man had striven for, tormented himself for in his small, ignorant mind, and this was what he had got. Something blasphemous was shouted from the crowd. But why all these years of labour, of spiritual torment, the whole task of one's life (to defeat anarchism), if a man could find in this the ultimate and supreme peace? Alyosha Karamazov would go through the monastery and become a revolutionary. No, not in search of an anarchic or any other social system, but in search of truth. In flight from that Denier—scorner of humanity—who would give bread, the tower of Babel and a servile conscience the name of happiness. Alyosha, too, would most surely be executed. He would stand like this, white in the face, and bow, and then shout something to the crowd. The condemned man shouted, "I die

for you!" And it was so painful, astonishingly painful, because Alyosha could have shouted those very words.

Her departure for Odessa was inevitable and it was no use trying to dissuade her. He was becoming more and more aware of that trait in her indomitable character—to bear all the pain herself. Strong forces were being sent to Odessa. Figner was there, preparing the execution of Panyutin, head of the governor's office, a vicious watch-dog with all the Odessa cruelties and reprisals of the past eighteen months on his conscience. Sonya would be followed to Odessa by Sablin, Grisha Isayev and Yakimova. And in Odessa itself there were loyal people who could be relied on: Leo Zlatopolsky, Trigoni, and some of the working men. The Committee had decided to postpone the execution of Panyutin and prepare an attack on the tsar, who would probably travel through Odessa on his way to Livadia in spring.

But why did Sonya have to go? It would mean their parting and every parting now might be for ever. And there was something that no one else knew; they had agreed upon it in a moment of weakness and it concerned only the two of them—they would try to be together to the end. They would try! But the moment the new plan was suggested (rent a shop as man and wife, set up a trade, and from the shop make a tunnel and mine the street along which Alexander would pass on his way from the station to the dock), Sonya demanded that she should be sent to Odessa. And, of course, the Committee agreed because she had done so brilliantly as housewife during the attempt near Moscow. Andrei could have been an excellent partner for her—Sonya, trying to explain her decision, said that she had thought of him at once and only afterwards realised that it was impossible—but he could not go to Odessa. He was too well known there. So she was put in charge of the whole operation and Vera Figner and Baska were to be her assistants; Sablin, the Committee's agent, was made her "husband", and Grishka Isayev was responsible for the technical, dynamite, side. So that was that. They had to say good-bye. Perhaps for ever.

And he knew that the more agonising it was for her to part with him, the more determined she would be to go. The worst hardships, the deepest pain must be hers. Would it hurt? Yes,

then go to meet that hurt, that pain! She told him how she had left home because she would not submit to the tyranny of her father, who had insisted on her giving up a friendship with a girl from a poor family. That had been despotism in domestic dress, the squalid, disgusting kind, a wonderful thing for making you choose your road in life. It had done this for Sonya. She had left home and gone her own way. But the separation from her mother had been the first torment of her life.

And she was the same in everything: there was no stopping her.

And what of Petersburg, the few party people in Petersburg—what were they doing? They were arguing about the new secret instructions, "Preparatory Work of the Party", that had been drawn up in January by Tigrych with the help of Andrei and the Janitor. They were looking for a flat for the printing press, planning the escape of Hartmann, keeping in touch with Kletochnikov and building up the workers' and students' circles. These were day-to-day matters, the kind of thing that anyone could do. So Sonya considered. But she, of course, had to be involved in something crucial, something right out of the ordinary. After all, it was she who had helped Myshkin and Voinaralsky to escape, she who had run the house on the Moscow railway line and was now eager to go to Odessa because the hand of fate had moved in that direction. She had been worried about Lev Hartmann, the Alchemist, her former "husband" of the days near Moscow. And this had delayed her departure a little. At the beginning of February, Hartmann had been arrested by the French police, not without the assistance of secret Russian agents and Russian money. The tsarist government had been trying to have him extradited. The party had been doing all it could to prevent this. Proclamations had been issued, letters written to the President of France and the French people, and a special messenger had been sent to Europe. Lavrov had headed a deputation to Gambetta, Chairman of the Chamber of Deputies. Hugo had written an open letter: "You shall not surrender this man!" And Hartmann had not been surrendered. At the end of the month he had been released and had left France for England.

The repercussions had spread across Europe. With the Alchemist now a world celebrity, the party had reason to rejoice. It had saved a comrade and in its struggle with a

mighty empire this "contemptible little gang of conspirators", these "underground pygmies" had won the day. But how? That was the mystery. And it was worth puzzling over. Two hitherto unknown forces had appeared on the European scene. One was world public opinion; the other was the mysterious and all-powerful Russian terrorists. If they could blow up palaces in Petersburg, where was the guarantee that these devils would not extend their tactics to the Palais des Champs Elysées in Paris? Somebody's knees had begun to shake, no doubt, when he had suddenly found lying on his desk a letter from the People's Will, fresh from the snowy wastes of Russia.

And Andrei now began to feel at times a new sensation. In the street, in the trams, pushing his way through the crowds—but always alone, without comrades—he caught himself indulging in a sudden, proud, almost boyish kind of joy: "Ha-ha! It's a tremendous force, isn't it! You're shaking in your shoes, my dear sirs!" And in this excited mood, in the middle of March, he hurried to the secret address, where Kletochnikov was due to appear.

Later that evening Sonya would be there, to say good-bye.

It was usually the Janitor who maintained contact with Kletochnikov, but today the Janitor was busy. Andrei had seen their agent twice, the last time had been in January. He had been fairly calm then, had spoken in a quiet voice, coughed occasionally, looked ill. One thing had struck Andrei at the time. The man never wrote anything down, he had it all off by heart. How could one possibly memorise such mountains of information? After Kletochnikov had gone, he had voiced his doubts. Was it all so exact? The Janitor had said that it was, everything had been checked time and again.

Kletochnikov was waiting for him. Andrei noticed at once that the agent was extremely agitated. He jumped to his feet as soon as Andrei entered. On the table there were three cups. Nikolai Vasilyevich and Natalya Nikolayevna were drinking from two of them; the third, empty, had been put there for Andrei. But Natalya Nikolayevna immediately picked up her cup and went out into another room. She had not so long ago been made a member of the Committee and she could have remained present during the conversation, but out of a sense of delicacy she always withdrew. Sometimes she was invited, sometimes not, Kletochnikov was the party's supreme secret and only two or three people had access to him.

"Goldenberg is betraying us!" he said. "On March 10th, the Third Section received a telegram from Colonel Pershin in Odessa: 'Goldenberg has decided to confess all his crimes, explain the organisation of the terrorist faction, and expose all its members of which he has any knowledge', and so on. This has been the subject of enormous rejoicing among our reptiles."

Vague rumours from Odessa and from Kharkov had indicated that Grishka was giving them away. But apparently these exposures had been confused and insignificant, only *partial* exposures. Pershin's telegram was ominous indeed. Grishka knew a lot. What had come over him? He was unbalanced, muddleheaded, and had a high opinion of himself, but would he betray? Denounce all the party members he knew? Perhaps he had been frightened to death? No, he was not a coward.

Telegrams from Pershin were coming in almost every day. With such detailed evidence they would stage a big trial and bring in everybody, Stepan, Kvyatkovsky, Bukh, Zund, everyone they had managed to lay hands on.

"I did make a note of one of the telegrams, the one that came in today," Kletochnikov said. "Despite my own rule. Because it gives the explanation. Here it is, from this same Pershin."

He smoothed out on the table a rolled slip of very thin paper.

"I shall not conceal from Your Excellency that the measures employed to induce Goldenberg to confess cannot be called absolutely moral. But having exhausted all other means, we were compelled to trick him into believing that the terrorists' cause was a complete failure, and he in order to reduce the number of unnecessary victims has decided to expose everyone he knows, showing no mercy at all on himself...." Kletochnikov paused for a moment and remarked, "What nice tricksters they are!" Then he went on reading. "Goldenberg is giving us his evidence in the full belief that we are acting from the same motives as he is, and yesterday he declared that if he ever had cause to regret his frankness we should not have the pleasure of chatting with him the next day, this being a hint at suicide."

The investigation of Grishka's case was being conducted by Dobrzhinsky. Ah, Dobrzhinsky! Andrei remembered him. Fair-haired, polite, smoking slim cigarettes, with a habit of

almost closing his eyes when he smiled. When he heard about Dobrzhinsky, Andrei felt depressed; he had a premonition that this gentleman would squeeze Grishka dry.

And all the evening, even when talking about something else, Andrei thought continuously of Grishka, of what Grishka knew and what, thank God, he might not know—there was much less of the second than the first. He knew practically everything, except about the explosion in the Winter Palace. The killing of Kropotkin, Solovyov's attempt, the congresses, the split into two parties, Aleksandrovsk, Kharkov, Moscow, Odessa—Grishka had been everywhere.

Kletochnikov dictated slowly from memory and Andrei took notes: Yakubovich, Alexander Filippovich, Master's Degree, St. Petersburg University.... In 1876, disappeared from Petersburg after embezzling fifteen thousand rubles. Lived in Paris, travelled in America, maintaining close relations with the Russian embassy.... Has a wide circle of acquaintances among society of the capital and the provinces.... Beard and dark moustache, frightened expression of the eyes. Large, Grecian nose.... Yanov, Alexander Ivanovich, medium height, thick lips....

As soon as they got the press going, all these facts would be made public. Spies must be destroyed, both physically, as Presnyakov had done, or like this, by publicity. In the evening, Sonya came and he told her about Grishka. Surely this would be just the time for him to go to Odessa! No one knew the lower depths of Odessa life, the underworld, the smugglers, as he did. They could have found a way of penetrating the fortress prison, through the criminal elements, and tried to stop Grishka's mouth. When he was moved to Petersburg it would be too late.

Sonya listened dispiritedly. It was only a dream, no one would let Andrei go to Odessa. All right, then, here were some people who might be able to help. He gave her several names and addresses and a letter to Vaska Merkulov, a working man.

"It's not his destruction that frightens me.... That is going to happen anyway," Sonya said. "But such a change. From a butterfly into a caterpillar...."

She could not shake off her thoughts of Grishka.

After all, Grishka had been in love with her; a fleeting, muddled thing, like everything else that happened to Grishka's feelings. The Janitor had related that he had once caught

Grishka in a state of tipsy excitement bubbling declarations of love to Sonya, and had told him off sharply. Sonya had been very amused. She had been sorry for Grishka, and had forgiven him much because of his reckless courage, but the danger had been brewing there already; courage without the guiding power of reason could be a curse.

Now she said with a grimace of disdain that they would not do anything about Grishka because this would interfere with the main operation.

After that she said, "Do you know who I want to see in Odessa?"

He paused before answering because he had suddenly guessed.

"No," he said, "don't try to find them."

"But I want to see your son!"

"Don't."

"Just see him and that's all." She looked at him from under lowered brows and he reflected that she must have shown the same defiance to her father when he forbid her something.

"Please yourself then," he said. "But don't tell me about it. I'm not interested."

Chapter Seven

That was when the landslide had started, that day, February 2nd, when he had confessed about Kropotkin. Of course, they had known all about it already, and now he was beginning to realise that he himself had passed on this knowledge through Fedka, brought about his own ruin. But even then he could have shut up like a clam, denied everything, and yet he had confessed and signed the confession. The thought had suddenly come to him during the night in a brilliant flash. Yes, he would confess, he would sign, but in court he would state his reasons, reasons that would be obvious to the world. He would tell about the beating up of the students of Kharkov University, about the violence committed on the prisoners in the Kharkov gaol. It would shake the world! And he said firmly to Dobrzhinsky, "I will sign only if they will allow me to make an open appeal to the Russian Government."

"What do you mean by an open appeal?" Dobrzhinsky asked. "What kind of appeal?"

"A perfectly simple one. My first demand will be to end this fratricidal war, that is to say, the terror. And my second will be for a constitution."

Dobrzhinsky turned pale and seemed rather confused, but he then offered Grishka a sheet of paper and said, "Certainly, you can put it all down at the end of your testimony. We shall pass it on to St. Petersburg."

And this Grishka did. The appeal to the government sounded splendid, not pleading or persuasive, but a sharp and noble demand. Three days later came the news of the explosion in the Winter Palace. Dobrzhinsky was terribly upset. "Do you understand, Gospodin Goldenberg," he shouted, "how badly Russia needs your knowledge, your help now!"

Grishka was stunned by the news. He also shouted, "I demand proof! I must have guarantees! Not one hair shall fall from their heads!"

The days that followed were confused, bewildering. Colonel Pershin and Dobrzhinsky looked like dithering fools. They were expecting changes. Grishka was allowed to buy wine at the shop. He was allowed a visit by his mother. The old woman wept and kissed the hands of the gendarmes and begged Grishka to submit and confess, to take pity on his father. And she was allowed to spend several days in Grishka's cell. They were days and nights without sleep. Excited by the wine, Grishka paced or rather dashed about the cell, sometimes shouting and waving his arms and making thunderous speeches. "My lords, allow me in a few brief words to draw a picture that will take your breath away and freeze the blood in your veins...." His mother crouched in a corner, staring at Grishka with tear-filled eyes. At last Dobrzhinsky announced, "Your appeal, Gospodin Goldenberg, has been passed on to the people in power. I am able to tell you in confidence that it has been favourably received and with special interest. There have been tremendous changes in St. Petersburg. A supreme administrative commission has been set up under Count Loris-Melikov, who is well known for his moderation. I told you, I predicted..." and he wagged his finger in joyful excitement—there was more than mere obscurantism at top, there were reasonable forces; now our one goal must be to help them! Because it was going to be a titanic struggle....

So, the new Petersburg Administration headed by Loris-Melikov was awaiting his, Grishka's, help. Now that was quite

obvious. And almost the same pleas came from Grishka's mother and his unfortunate father, whose letter the mother brought to the prison. The six children and adopted daughter of the Kiev merchant were all either in exile or in prison. The family had been broken up, its young lives shattered, and the old folk were on the threshold of a lonely death. But what was all this suffering for? "Russia is a great country, let Russia's youth take care of her," said the mother. "The fate of Russian youth and, therefore, the fate of Russia is now in a certain sense in your hands, Gospodin Goldenberg!" said Dobrzhinsky. Grishka asked for pen and paper. For half of February and the beginning of March he talked to Dobrzhinsky, discussed things, argued, explained, and Dobrzhinsky wrote nothing down, Grishka wrote it all down himself, in the evenings. On March 9th, Grishka presented a large manuscript of eighty pages in close handwriting—the story of every action, beginning from that of Zasulich. He then wrote an addendum of seventy-four pages containing descriptions of all the revolutionaries he knew, their views, works, services, peculiarities of character and even their appearance, anything that he could remember. And as it happened, he remembered a great deal. He himself was surprised. He remembered and described 143 people! Who else in Russia but he, Grishka, could boast such a circle of acquaintances in the revolutionary movement? All these people had to be saved from inevitable execution, from the meaningless destruction of their own lives. Grishka wrote about them, these wonderful people, in tones of love and admiration. He called Zhelyabov a "brilliant and amazing personality".

Dobrzhinsky informed him that his work had been highly appraised by the people who were conducting this titanic struggle, that Russia would not forget Grishka's services, and that in a short time he would be summoned to the capital for a personal interview. At the beginning of April this was confirmed. They wanted to see him in Petersburg! Preparations were hastily made. Dobrzhinsky had also been summoned. The only somewhat perplexing thing was that they dispatched Grishka like some exceptionally important and dangerous criminal, in heavy fetters, with an escort of eleven men. Grishka protested to Colonel Pershin. This was rather a surprise, could he not go unfettered? But Pershin replied with an unexpectedly vicious leer.

"Why are you surprised? You are a murderer and ought to be fettered. He is surprised—a fine fellow indeed!"

Thank God this scoundrel and blimp would be left behind in Odessa. Grishka was accompanied by Dobrzhinsky. The prosecutor explained that the strong escort had been provided in view of a possible attack. There were still some hotheads about. It was quite natural and should not cause any embarrassment. As for the fetters, that was a pure formality. He should not pay any attention. "And besides," Dobrzhinsky whispered, "you and I know that our views are not shared by everyone. You must suffer and endure everything for the sake of the great goal...."

Grishka was prepared to agree with this intelligent man and to put up with everything, but he was alarmed—would they understand him in the right way? He found the journey tiresome and depressing and could not sleep. He was tormented by thirst and by his fears—not of an attack or death, he feared nothing of the kind, but only that they might not understand. And this was a fear that he could not shake off. The journey to Petersburg took four days and on April 13th, a cold, blue day—though it was spring!—they began to rumble along cobbled streets and there was a real whiff of Petersburg smoke in the air and through a chink he caught a glimpse of bright colours in the sunshine and thrilled to the smell of taverns, of fried meat, German cigars, and beer—all the lovely things he had enjoyed with his dear friends and comrades only a year ago in these very streets and that were now lost for ever. They brought him to the fortress and put him in the Trubetskoi Bastion. They took off the fetters, gave him back his own belongings that had been confiscated upon his arrest, changed his convict's robe for a suit of civilian clothes and provided him with pen and paper.

Dobrzhinsky with a new, cold gleam in his eyes and a new official tone of voice—as though here in Petersburg he had become a different person, most amusing, Grishka laughed inwardly at this change in the poor provincial—explained that the time for idle chatter had passed and a formal deposition had to be prepared for the trial.

"Which is to be held when?" Grishka inquired.

"That you need not know," Dobrzhinsky cut him short.

Grishka was not to be put off like that.

"I am the main figure in this trial and am I not to know

when it is to be held? I demand that this be clearly indicated!"

"You can demand nothing," Dobrzhinsky replied in the same tone of voice.

Something snapped in the pit of Grishka's stomach. Ah, but what did it matter—did it matter all that much when the trial would begin? There was no sense in making a fuss. He had come here not to talk to Dobrzhinsky—there had been plenty of that—but to discuss matters with an important personage. Perhaps, even the count himself. Dobrzhinsky had hinted as much. They began to discuss the way the deposition should be presented, according to the rules of the court. Dobrzhinsky dictated and Grishka wrote it all down. They worked for a long time. The cell was a large one, about six metres by three, and perfectly isolated—not a sound from above or below or any side.

When the work was finished Dobrzhinsky seemed to reassume his old, Odessa self—the man who understood everything. Grishka wagged a warning finger at the prosecutor.

"But bear this in mind, Gospodin Dobrzhinsky, if just one hair falls from the heads of my comrades, I shall never forgive myself!"

"Well, I don't know about hair, but a lot of heads are going to roll—that's a fact." And Dobrzhinsky went out without another word. But, then, he had always left like that.

Grishka was dumbfounded by these words. Was it a joke? If so, it was a very foolish and tactless joke. He hammered on the door and shouted, but Dobrzhinsky did not return. Only on the next day—and what a night it had been!—did the prosecutor reappear, smiling as if nothing whatever had happened, and confirmed that what he has said the day before had been a joke. On Wednesday a most important visit would take place—by His Highness the Count Loris-Melikov. They must think over what to say in reply to his questions. The count had seen Grishka's testimony. In the forthcoming campaign he would undoubtedly rely on it, but he would need some additional information. Particularly in connection with the attempt by Solovyov....

The count was a dark-complexioned Caucasian with a big fluffy grey-black moustache. He looked like a cat. And his conversation was cat-like, insidious, cold. With his cloak wrapped round him and keeping at a distance from Grishka—not from fear, of course, but from distaste—he sat

not on a chair but on the edge of the sheet of boiler plating that was fitted into the wall instead of a table, swung his patent-leather boot to and fro, boring into Grishka with his unblinking coal-black gaze, and asked questions. Grishka wanted to begin by discussing the constitution.

"Count! The sovereign's belief that without granting a constitution...."

Loris-Melikov interrupted him with a gentle wave of the hand.

"We shall go into the matter another time."

Grishka liked that: the voice, the gentle gesture and the "another time". He agreed, "As you wish, Your Highness." Was there any other political prisoner in Russia who would ever have been visited in his cell by Count Loris-Melikov and have him sitting there on the table, swinging his leg? Not just for the sake of curiosity, but as a genuinely interested party. It was not Grishka who needed the Count, but the Count who needed Grishka. And although Grishka was filled with pride and jubilation, he stifled his usual rapid flow of speech and forced himself to speak slowly, weightily, and sat on the iron bedstead in a casual attitude, leaning back against the wall with one leg over the other, and even contrived to swing it to and fro in its battered prison shoe without laces or heel.

They spoke of the forthcoming trial at which Grishka was to speak. No, not as a witness, God forbid, but as one who could explain, a prophet, a Moses, leading his people out of the desert to the promised land, to peace and repose.

"You and I are not native Russian citizens," the Count said, still drilling with that gimlet eye, "which means that we bear all the more responsibility. We must do everything conceivable for the peace of this country. Each one of us at his post."

"But I would like ... once again ... to emphasise..." Grishka's voice was shaking slightly and his pauses were impressive, "that my comrades must be inviolable ... that is an absolute condition."

"Have you not been convinced by the fact that for three months not a single one of your comrades revolutionaries has suffered in any way?"

"What about the execution of Rozovsky and Lozinsky in Kiev?" Grishka had heard about this execution, at the beginning of March, from a warder in Odessa.

Loris-Melikov smiled into his moustache in a way that made

his face seem even more cat-like, and stretched his arms wide.

"But what kind of revolutionaries are they? Mere boys, mindless young fools. They suffered for their own foolishness. I repeat!" he raised his voice. "Since the Supreme Administrative Commission has been in office not one real revolutionary has suffered. And will not suffer if you behave in a reasonable manner. You, yes, you! The fate of your friends depends on you and you alone."

After this there were questions about the Solovyov affair, about the congresses, and about everything that Grishka's 150 pages had not made sufficiently clear to the Count. His interest in technicalities was surprising. For example, Grishka had described the making of the dynamite from what he had been told by someone, perhaps the Alchemist, he could not remember who. He had said that the dynamite was made of glycerine and magnesium. But now he was expected to say exactly what proportions, what kind of glycerine and what kind of magnesium, black or white. The Count was particularly intrigued by the operations in Kharkov, where just at that time—six months ago—he had been governor. He knew many of the people Grishka mentioned quite well and questioned him closely about them. And another thing he wanted to know—how had it come to light that the revolutionaries had planned to attack the tsar by mining Malaya Sadovaya Street in the capital? Grishka had forgotten this himself. Apparently he had given this piece of information at the end of December and it had been passed on to Petersburg, but how Grishka had got to know about it he could not now say himself. Somebody must have mentioned it a long time ago. It had been just a scheme that was afterwards forgotten and came to nothing.

"The young people must realise quite clearly that the country is taking a new road. If this is not understood there will be a disaster."

"The young people are ready to understand, Count!"

"First there must be a clear and open explanation. Call it an act of repentance, if you wish. And as a result, the reconciliation of all classes, a general restoration of harmony, and labour for the happiness and prosperity of Russia. Is that not how you see this trial?"

"And the return of hundreds of our comrades from prisons and exile. The abolition of the central prisons and the Third Section...."

"All this as a result of the trial. The trial, as a public, nationwide investigation in the true Russian communal tradition must cut this Gordian knot in which the unfortunate circumstances of Russia have become entangled."

When Loris-Melikov with the two important gentlemen accompanying him—one must have been from the Petersburg Chamber of Justice and the other was a grey-moustached colonel—left the cell, prosecutor Dobrzhinsky who had maintained a tense silence up to now began a sudden very enthusiastic but quiet clapping, in imitation of applause.

"Bravo, bravo, Gospodin Goldenberg! We have won! We can congratulate each other!" And he actually seized Grishka's hand and started pumping it. "You realise what this means. The sovereign's highest advisor has paid you a personal visit in your cell. Right up to the last minute I never believed it would happen! What a furore this will create! All the malevolents, the intriguers who were putting obstacles in our way and creating pitfalls now, thank the Lord, will have to shut up...."

Grishka himself was thrilled. The very thing that they were striving for, that alone could save Russia—mutual understanding between the government and the young generation—had, it seemed, just taken place. On the first floor of the Trubetskoi Bastion, in the cell for prisoners under investigation. Dobrzhinsky actually stayed in the cell when the warder brought in the evening tea—two earthenware mugs and a three-kopek French roll. Tea was always brought in two mugs.

"Bring another roll!" Dobrzhinsky commanded.

Evidently he was hungry. While he sipped his tea and chewed the roll, he slipped his left hand into his pocket, took out a packet and spread out several photographs fanwise on the sheet of boiler plating. He pointed his finger at one. Who was it? Grishka recognised Sashka, "Alexander I". And he said, "Kvyatkovsky". The warder came in with another roll and Grishka also started chewing greedily and drinking the tea.

The next day Dobrzhinsky reported to Loris-Melikov in a letter:

"Goldenberg, who is an extremely vain person, was flattered by the visit of Your Highness and seems to have become even more convinced that people are interested in him.... Having observed this pathological vanity in Goldenberg, I made use of

this aspect of his character to persuade him that he is to be regarded not as an informer but as a person who has realised his mistakes and wishes to atone for them by performing the public service of exposing the whole criminal organisation.... Goldenberg is already beginning to grow accustomed to the idea of openly, by means of evidence given under investigation and in court, confessing and exposing his accomplices. He is already beginning to talk of the introduction he will give to his testimony, of the speech that he will deliver in court in his own defence against the protests of his accomplices concerning his exposure of them."

The fact that Grishka had identified Kvyatkovsky struck Dobrzhinsky as an important turning-point and he immediately informed Loris-Melikov, who in turn reported it to the sovereign. Alexander II made a note on the report, "I consider this a most important discovery."

From Kletochnikov came the news that Goldenberg had been in Petersburg since the middle of April, in the fortress. He was giving extensive evidence. So the Odessa comrades had not been able to neutralise or frighten this Judas. The whole Odessa operation had been a fiasco from beginning to end; they had been late in finding out about the tsar's arrival and late in their preparations. The people involved were expected back any day now. But who was to blame? Just the wretched lack of funds, if only this damned money would be cursed for ever! Since the execution of Lizogub with his immense fortune they had lost their main source of funds. There was no money to rent the flat they needed, to play the part of a rich man, to obtain the latest equipment, to recruit expensive spies, among the court servants, for example. They had to count every kopek, to make do on what little they had.

Andrei slipped round to the flat of Anya Danilova, one of the women students. He had heard that Presnyakov and Okladsky had been there the day before. He had no special need of Vanichka; the man he wanted to see was Presnyakov. He wanted to consult with this "terror of spies" on how to get hold of that son-of-a-bitch Grishka.

Lately Presnyakov had been going everywhere with Okladsky. The huge, gloomy, deep-voiced Presnyakov, and that quick laughing little devil good for any work—Vanichka Okladsky. Where their permanent abode was, no one knew.

Probably they had none. Once or twice they had spent the evening together in the taverns and when they said good-bye in the street, Presnyakov would say to Okladsky, "Come on, Vanichka, my boy, let's look for a hide-out!"

And besides.... Okladsky was not the person to cheer him up. Not that he had done anything wrong, it was simply the memory of those Aleksandrovsk days with their mud, the shout of "Fire ahead!" and the failure. He seldom met him and gave him nothing very important to do.

But today they were both needed, Presnyakov especially.

Anya Danilova, a serious young woman who wore a pince-nez was a medical student and a writer—she had written some stories based on the life of the common people. Anya had been a friend of Stepan Shirayev in Saratov. She greeted Andrei with her usual conspiratorial half-smile.

"Yes, I know, it's not me you want. They're not here."

"Will they be?"

"It's hard to say. They called yesterday. Wait for half an hour. If they're not here by eight, that means...."

Andrei walked through into the room. Danilova knew him as "Zakhar". She thought he was a worker closely connected with the revolutionary party, perhaps even with its leadership, but nothing more detailed than that. Like all the young ladies of extreme radical views—Andrei had met plenty in Petersburg—Danilova was inclined to exaggerate her revolutionary zeal. She at once started up a pointed discussion on what the party was waiting for. She was even prepared to do a little hectoring. Why this long pause? Why had there been no answer to the execution of Rozovsky and Lozinsky? Rozovsky was a mere boy and had been executed for nothing, only because they had found a lithographed sheet and copy of Nekrasov's poem "A Feast for the Gods" in his possession. And Lozinsky had been put to death for just one proclamation. How could the party remain silent!

"Do you know what happened at our lectures when Professor Trapp—yes, the one who brought Solovyov round, he's our lecturer on pharmacology—had the cheek to talk about that case and how the potassium cyanide had decayed and Solovyov could not kill himself? Do you know what we did?"

"What?"

"All of us, without any preliminary discussion, got up and walked out!"

This was said so proudly that Andrei could scarcely conceal a smile.

"That was a splendid thing to do. But perhaps our party is not wasting its time either?"

But it was, indeed it was. Time had been wasted in Aleksandrovsk, in Odessa. These radicals were generating a lot of hot air, but they were right in a way. Precious time was being lost. They were hoping for some fantastic benefits from Loris-Melikov, but they would get damn all, and anybody with any sense knew that.

"The pause, I should think, is due to the fact that society—I mean the general public, who read the newspapers—are at the moment hypnotised by Loris-Melikov's promises. But that bluff will be called in six months.

"And the party will start acting again?" The eyes under the round lenses—kind, shortsighted eyes—were blazing with impatience.

He thought to himself, and this nice young woman is hurrying us to kill, to blow things up, to give history a push. What is the reason for it—fashion? A deep inner need? Or just the immense, universal impossibility of going on in the old way?

He gave a dry little laugh.

"No assassination attempts for two months, nobody murdered and you're getting bored? Disgusting, isn't it?" He became more and more cheerful. "Why are they so idle? They must have gone to sleep in hiding!"

"You are parodying one of my women friends," Danilova said. "I'm not such an idiot as that. But the truth is that we have got used to the existence of this force. In fact, I would even say that we attach some sort of mystique to it. Just as the ancients used to see something mystical in the forces of nature. Something inevitable, something fatal. In summer there must be storms, the lightning must flash, the thunderbolt must strike down the wicked. So now we are surprised. Why is there no thunder? I have known a lot of people who have something to do with these celestial phenomena—I knew Stepan, I know Presnyakov, Vanichka, you, others—but it's rather strange that I treat you all as ordinary people. I can't believe that you are hurlers of thunderbolts!"

"We *are* ordinary people. The others are the thunderbolt men."

"Now then!" she wagged a warning finger. "Don't belittle yourselves. I can't say anything about you, Zakhar, but I know about Presnyakov for sure. He kills spies. I knew one of those that he killed quite well. Zharkov, the compositor. A wretched nobody and somehow pitiful and nervous. In Saratov they used to call him the 'suslik'. And yet, when I think of that huge bear grabbing hold of him and choking him, such a puny little fellow...."

And then this benevolent chatterer went off into all kinds of rigmarole. Yes, Zharkov had given away the whereabouts of the printing press, he had deserved to die, but the killing itself, the entreaties of the victim—Presnyakov said he hadn't even resisted—were unbearable to contemplate.

Yes, that was what their radicals were like—thirsting for blood, but fainting at the mere sight of it. For some reason he felt particularly angry with Presnyakov. What could be more foolish than to hold forth about his exploits in front of women students?

And when the two friends turned up at past eight o'clock, Andrei greeted them dryly. A friend of Danilova's, the student Makarova, also appeared and they sat down to have tea. Okladsky had brought some sweets, a jar of honey and some smoked sausage. They seemed used to these bring-and-share suppers because no one thanked him; on the contrary, the girls ordered him about like a servant.

"Vanya, bring the samovar! Vanya, cut some bread, but none of your cabman's doorsteps!"

Okladsky did everything deftly, trotting to and fro from the rooms to the kitchen and from the kitchen into the yard, carried out the rubbish and cleaned the gas ring. He joked and fooled about while his massive friend sat on the couch with one booted leg over the other and solemnly smoked a cigarette. Andrei seized his chance of telling Okladsky, "Be here tomorrow. The Janitor will come in the morning, he needs you. There's a machine to be fixed."

"It shall be done, your honour!" Vanichka blurted out, saluting and making his eyes bulge.

Danilova's friend burst out laughing. She found Vanichka amusing. Yes it was quite a jolly company and he seemed to be the odd man out. Presnyakov was also having fun in his own way. When the cord on Danilova's pince-nez happened to break, he picked it up and made a noose, which he slipped

round his own neck and began to pull tight. The girls protested furiously.

"How can you? Stop it at once!"

"What of it? You must get used to it," was the imperturbable reply.

Vanichka roared with laughter. There was no chance of talking business, so Andrei signed to Presnyakov and they went outside.

"Listen here, namesake! You shouldn't blab about your exploits on the Neva ice."

"Who shouldn't I blab to? Stepan spoke of Anya as if she was his own sister."

"It's not the kind of thing to tell sisters either. Still, never mind, it's your business. You're not a kid. You know yourself they are scouring the city for you." Presnyakov, his vanity hurt, paled at this reprimand and Andrei put a hand on his shoulder. "I was waiting to tell you something else. This is from our agent. It's in your department." He held out a list of names, information that Kletochnikov had passed on about worker spies. Presnyakov moved exclusively among the workers and was on back-slapping terms with them in the taverns of the Petersburg side and the Vasilyevsky Island. This paper was just what he needed. He grabbed it and read by the light of the candle in the narrow corridor, grinding his teeth.

Andrei asked, "Any of your acquaintances there?"

Presnyakov had a habit of not answering at once.

"Well? Are there any?"

"I reckon there are. Two...." Another pause and more grinding of his teeth as he examined the paper. Andrei Presnyakov was a heavy-going man. Everything about him was heavy—his fists, his thoughts, his silence. "But I had a hunch about them already."

He folded the paper neatly with his heavy fingers and pushed it away carefully into his breast pocket.

"And there's another job for you, Andrei. Do you know where Bogorodsky is? We haven't been able to find him for over two days now."

Some other people rented two rooms in the flat and it was not wise to talk in the corridor. They went down the backstairs. Andrei related what he had heard recently from Kletochnikov, about Goldenberg and about the forthcoming trial of Stepan, Kvyatkovsky, Zund and probably the printers. It would be

held very soon, in summer, and Grishka was going to make a big speech full of denunciations. How could he be prevented? That was a vital matter now. They must shut him up somehow. There was probably no chance now of executing him there, in the Trubetskoi Bastion. Andrei made it sound like a question because he was ioolishly hoping that Presnyakov, the most inventive and reckless of the "thunderbolt men"—the special group for executing spies, organised three years ago, was his idea—would suddenly say, "Why not?" But no, Presnyakov held his peace, and even lowered his head in agreement. You couldn't get hold of Grishka there. Could he be frightened? No, he was not the timid kind. There was some mystery about this case. It was not just treachery. Knowing Grishka and his foam-flecked brain one might assume that a muddle had arisen and some element invisible to the observer had played a part. In short, they needed Bogorodsky—to make contact with Grishka. Through Zund, who was also imprisoned in the Trubetskoi Bastion. Threaten him to start with, give him a good punch, let him come round, then open the fool's eyes for him.

Presnyakov said that Bogorodsky might be at a certain flat on the Vasilyevsky Island, Line 12. They were talking in the yard. It was past ten but still as light as day.

Presnyakov clasped Andrei's hand and this impulsive, powerful handshake drove away all Andrei's angry disapproval. This man would do everything, the possible and the impossible.

"I'll go and say good-bye. And I'd better be heading for the island!" He ran to the backstairs door.

He won't even have any tea, Andrei reflected. He waited for a couple of minutes and, sure enough, Presnyakov came thumping down the stairs in his heavy boots.

After a long search the Janitor had found a flat in Podolskaya Street where they could set up the new printshop. Kibalchich and Panya Ivanovskaya were installed as the tenants under the name of Agacheskulov; their maid, ostensibly a poor relative, was to be Lilochka Terentyeva.

Andrei often called at the flat at 11, Podolskaya Street. He was needed there both as a helper and adviser. They were having trouble with the press. The first number of the *People's Will Newssheet* had been seriously delayed and relations be-

tween the "married couple" and between the "master" and "maid" were by no means all they should be. Before going to live at Podolskaya Street the women had never set eyes upon Kibalchich and had hardly known each other. The Janitor, chuckling, related how he had "made the match" and presented Kibalchich for "viewing". The women had attended in a high state of excitement, very smart and well made up, wishing not so much to please their co-habitant, as to find out what sort of man he was. And why not, if they were going to be shut up together with him for weeks on end! Kibalchich, on the other hand, remained casually aloof, muttering a remark here and there and saying he was in a hurry. The women were discouraged. But it was clear that the Technician was someone you had to get to know before you could like him. He was too absorbed in himself and his ideas, fantastically impracticable, and outwardly it might seem that he was indifferent and not really very clever. It was this indifference that frightened them.

Lilochka Terentyeva, whom Andrei had known a little in Odessa, confessed to him quite early, "Your Nikolai Ivanovich may be a good man, but he's rather slow."

Andrei laughed aloud.

"Slow? How can you, Lila! Why, he's one of Russia's brilliant brains!" He was speaking sincerely although perhaps overdoing it a little. In the last few months he and Kibalchich had become rather close and he was attracted by him. "If he had been living in a less corrupt age than this, he would have been a Descartes, a Lomonosov!"

"That may be, but as Gospodin Agacheskulov he's nobody's dream-boy. He's always silent, always shut up in himself, in books, in papers...."

That was at the beginning, when the "family" had only just set up home. Now relations had improved and the women seemed to have become reconciled to Kibalchich's character and merely teased him about it. He was unusually incompetent in domestic affairs, could not light a samovar or make a meal for himself, his room was in a state of permanent chaos and he would not let the women in, insisting that they would lose some of his papers. But now, at the end of May, the main worry was not the adjustment of "family" relations but the fact that the press was out of order. Real printing, like the splendid, clean work of the Sapyorny printers, just could not be achieved.

The press was a heavy steel frame with a zinc-plated bottom. The galleys with the composed type in them were set in the frame and screwed down tightly. The frame weighed about a hundred pounds and Panya and Lila liked to tell the story of the thirteenth labour of Hercules. One day Barannikov had driven up to the house in an open carriage—they had seen him from the window. He had been unusually altered, in a naval officer's cloak. He had jumped out of the carriage lightly, walked lightly past a few bystanders at the entrance, climbed quickly to the second floor and, on entering the flat, almost collapsed on the floor. It turned out that under his cloak he had been carrying this hundred-pound frame. The type was promptly smeared with ink, a sheet of paper was spread over it and rolled with a heavy cloth-covered cylinder. It was as simple as that. But for some unknown reason the printed page looked mottled and bare in places, with some terrible blots in others. Nobody could understand what was wrong. There were no real compositors left. Three printshops had been discovered one after the other. The one in Sapyornaya Street, then the Land-Sharers' press, which had been betrayed by Zharkov, and another one that the workers had set up themselves. And each time dozens of people who knew the job had been lost. So here were Panya, Lilochka and Kolya Kibalchich, the latter more concerned with calculations and high philosophy than printing. For three days everyone who felt like it had a go at the press, including Andrei. Even Tigrych gave advice and made suggestions, although as a mechanic he, like Andrei incidentally, was no good at all. But Tigrych had written a big article for the *Newssheet*. It was the *Newssheet*'s only article and he was very worked up about it. He wanted the radical "top class", as he put it, to read this article as soon as possible. Everyone else wanted the same thing. Tigrych had written scathingly about Loris-Melikov. This was badly needed and of great use; the sooner it appeared, the more use it would be. It would clear the heads of the idealists. And in any case, a party was alive while its press was alive, but their silence had now lasted for five months and was becoming rather like the silence of the grave.

But it was no use, the print was unreadable. And only on the last day of May, when he arrived at the flat in the evening, Andrei was greeted by Lilochka Terentyeva's flushed jolly face that reminded him of their evenings on the Odessa boulevards.

"Hurrah! It can be congratulations all round!" She flung her arms round his neck and kissed him, pulling him hastily into the flat. "The print is coming out fine," she whispered. "Even better than at Sapyornaya. We'll start printing tomorrow morning."

"Who fixed the press?"

Lilochka's eyes were shining and she always smiled when she looked at Andrei. What a splendid golden brown braid she had! In fact, she was a splendid girl all round. If it wasn't for....

She had been holding his hand, and suddenly she let go.

"Ever since Sonya Perovskaya went off to dear old Odessa," she said, "you have been awfully aloof with me. What's the matter?"

"Where does Sonya Perovskaya come in to it?"

"Oh, nothing, just my silly tongue. Sonya has such a lady-patroniser effect on everybody that when she's away one can loosen the harness a bit, can't one? Look what happens, I fling myself at him and embrace him like a naiad, and kiss him warmly and he stands like a stone statue asking, 'Who fixed the press?'"

But then, tired of pretending to be offended, Lilochka burst out laughing and ran away down the corridor. What a sweet creature! It was amazing how she had kept her tan from Odessa. All the Odessa people had lost their colour but she was still brown—brown cheeks, brown arms, and only her hair was a lighter shade.

"But who did put the press right?" he shouted after her.

"Vanichka! Okladsky!"

There were about five people sitting in the room. The Janitor and Tigrych did not so much as nod or glance at Andrei—they were so engrossed—arguing about certain lines in the article, the one Tigrych had written, it seemed. Kibalchich was on the Janitor's side. They were urging him to take out the more abusive words.

"That's not the real point, Lev. Another son-of-a-bitch won't convince anybody."

"All right, I agree. Let's hear how it sounds without that."

That was the good thing about Tigrych; he never held out to the last. He would argue for a while, then listen to reason.

"Right, I'm reading from that spot," the Janitor said. "Taras, sit down, don't get in the light! Now listen attentively, we go to press tomorrow." Andrei sat down on the couch

beside him. The Janitor, stammering a little, but loud and clear, read out, " 'At the same time Loris is cleverly exploiting the servile feelings of various journalists by graciously allowing them to talk to him; he loses nothing by it and the journalists melt with gratitude and are ready to stand on their heads for the sake of their kind master. While taking the liberal party away from us, Loris intends to do the same with the young people. Recent instructions by the government promise not only pardon but even a complete restoration of rights for those exiled in connection with student cases. Loris is also making advances to the students on a personal basis by summoning their representatives....' "

" 'Representatives must be in quotation marks!" Tigrych said.

"Yes, of course, and further, '... he promises all kinds of benefits. The same instruction apparently is aimed at dividing the radical party itself, thus opening a way of retreat for any traitor or faint-heart. We may assume that by and by Loris will divide the radicals into more or less dangerous factions and begin to patronise the more peaceable revolutionaries.

" 'Well, this is by no means a foolish policy! Rally the forces of the government, divide and weaken the opposition, isolate the revolution and crush all enemies one by one—not at all a bad idea! And note this, all these sparrows are to be caught exclusively with chaff, without any concessions.' "

"That's fine, about the chaff, Tigrych!" Ivanovskaya said.

"Then comes the passage that we are deleting. Right?" the Janitor asked. "About the loathsome hypocrisy, the canine brains, and so on. Do you agree?"

"Yes, cross it out. You men don't understand how difficult it is for us who write for the legal press to find the right tone. I remember the case of Krivenko...." Tigrych laughed. "Remember the article he wrote for us about Makovsky's circular? In the first version there was just nothing but vulgar abuse. What's the matter, Sergei Nikolayevich, we asked. The trouble is, he said, that when I feel myself free of the censorship I become so bitter against the government that I can find no other expressions except the choicest invective!"

"All right, don't start telling us stories, let's get on with it," the Janitor said. "The rest goes in without change. And the tail-piece now looks like this, 'Will the policy of the Armenian diplomat be crowned with success? This, of course, depends on

the amount of intelligence and civic sense available among the people of Russia at present. Loris's policy is built entirely with an eye to the foolishness and self-interests of society, the youth, the liberals and the revolutionaries. We have strong hopes that this will prove to be a miscalculation, that society cannot be tricked by promises alone, that the young people cannot be bought with grants and career opportunities, that the revolutionaries will rally together more closely than ever.' And from then on the whole paragraph stands as it was. And afterwards—Taras, listen, you don't know this, we only got it yesterday!—there will be a letter from Schmidt, the head of the Third Section."

The letter that the Janitor read out was a short message from Schmidt to the head of one of the provincial gendarme headquarters. Evidently it had been sent out secretly to all the provinces. The burden of it was that in view of various rumours about certain forthcoming changes, about the abolition of certain state institutions (read, the Third Section!), Gospodin Schmidt, acting on instructions from Loris-Melikov, hastened to inform those whom it might concern that all this was pure invention and bore no relation to the government's actual intentions. Splendid! The *Newssheet* would be a fine bombshell with which to shatter the hopes of certain slow-witted dreamers that had been multiplying of late like crows.

From the next room Lilochka called out that tea was ready. They were all excited and cheerful. Once again the party was riding high and tomorrow it would make its voice heard! Over tea Lilochka related how cleverly and skilfully Vanichka had fixed the press. The Janitor had brought him round at ten in the morning and by a quarter past eleven the job was done and the print looked fine.

"But I must tell you, Grigory," she called Andrei "Grigory" after the habit acquired in Odessa, but sometimes "Taras" and even "Boris", "that Vanichka of yours is a bit of a card. My granny used to be able to tell people by their noses. And the sharp-nosed ones like Vanichka she used to call 'cunning noses'. Besides, he's a rascal too, that Vanichka!"

And again, looking at Andrei as though she were telling it to him alone, she smiled and her eyes shone.

"Why is he a rascal?" Andrei asked. "Incidentally, he knows a trade, which is more than can be said for any of us."

"Don't you be hard on Vanichka. He's of my bringing up,"

Panya Ivanovskaya said. Everyone knew that her brother, Doctor Vasily Veliky, had found Vanichka about eight years ago among the factory waifs and taken him into his commune school, and since then Okladsky had been brought up among revolutionaries like an adopted son.

"The upbringing you gave him can't have been so marvellous. He did his best to give me a squeeze," Lila said, winking, "and he's just as good a hand at that too, like any sergeant squeezing the maid on the porch."

"Oh, dear!" Panya exclaimed worriedly. "When did he do that?"

"Never mind. You didn't notice. That's not what I'm talking about. There's no harm in that, it's quite allowable really."

"No, it's not allowable at all!" the Janitor raised his voice. "I'll pull his ears for him, the rascal."

"Good heavens, no! You are making me into a tell-tale. The man comes to our rescue and puts the press right...."

"All thanks to him for that, but for t'other—this is what he'll get," and the Janitor showed his fist.

"Janitor, don't you dare! I'll be mortally offended with you if you do anything of the kind. It's all nonsense. But the thing I really don't like about him is his perpetual, 'fire away!', 'fire away!' He puts the kettle on the table and it's 'fire away!' He gets the press going, 'fire away!' I asked him to take the rubbish pail out and back he comes with the empty pail and again it's 'fire away!' He's just making a clown of himself, isn't he?"

Kibalchich suddenly spoke, as he did sometimes, without any connection with what had been said, about the state purchase of private railways in Prussia. There was no further discussion about Okladsky, but Andrei did not like the "fire away" business either.

The three of them, Tigrych, the Janitor and Andrei, left the house together late at night. The rule was that the three should be seen together as little as possible. Tigrych quickly broke away, having found a sleepy cabby to take him home to Liteinaya Street. Katenka would be beside herself with worry by this time. The Janitor and Andrei had nobody waiting for them. They walked along slowly breathing in the night air; it was like the dusk of early evening and only the deserted streets and dark windows indicated that it was midnight and the city was asleep. The Janitor said he had met Bogorodsky that after-

noon. Presnyakov had found him the day before and passed on the message about Grishka.

Bogorodsky was the son of Colonel Bogorodsky, the keeper of the Trubetskoi Bastion. Sometimes it was possible to get in touch with the prisoners through the son. He would obtain books for the prison library and prick the pages of some of them with a needle. When the prisoners were visited, they were told which book to take. Zundelevich was to take out Pisemsky's novel *The Storm-Tossed Sea.*

The next day Andrei collected a bundle of freshly printed issues of the *People's Will Newssheet* and took it to Anya Korba's flat. By evening they would all be circulating among the workers' and students' study groups. He could have avoided this errand and sent any of his new friends, Kokovsky, for instance. But he was moved by the desire to show, to astonish. He went by cab, carrying the bundle in a workman's leather tool-bag. It was covered with a sprinkling of old and blackened potatoes that Panya had given him as camouflage.

The door opened and from Anya's shining eyes—everything showed instantly in their naive, Ukrainian openness—he guessed that something joyful was afoot. No, not the *Newssheet*, something else, unexpected.

"Taras, do you know..." Anya cooed.

"No, not yet."

Sonya came out of the room. And just as in autumn, when they had met after being separated for two months, from one glance at that face turned only towards him, towards *his* face, he felt a warm wave surge through him. She held out her hand and he took it.

"Taras, greetings. And once again I have nothing to show...."

Then he took her in his arms. Her cheeks were warm, she had grown thinner and seemed almost weightless; her hair and hands were slightly damp. It was only two hours since she arrived from the station and she had just taken a bath. For some reason there was no one else in the corridor. They were quite alone. She held him very tight with strong arms, pressing herself to his chest and sinking her head on it; he kissed her on the crown, on that damp wheaten-bright hair with its childish smell of soap, and understood everything at once—her suffering, misery and love.

Over supper Sonya told them how Vera had scraped togeth-

er the money, how they had bought a drill and groceries and rented a shop in Italyanskaya Street, and what trouble they had had with the drill because of the clay soil; it took a tremendous effort to move it and Sablin had fallen ill. Grisha Isayev had lost three fingers when a fuse had exploded; he was in hospital, in Odessa, and Baska was looking after him. Vera was there, too, but could not stand much more. She wanted a replacement and permission to return to the capital. So far only two had returned, Sonya and Sablin. The "Prokhorovsky couple".

Andrei suddenly sensed a slight stirring of embarrassment—about Sablin. There was something new there.

He asked, "Did they get on together?"

"Who?" Sonya asked.

"The Prokhorovsky couple."

"But, of course! How could anyone fail to get on with Kolya?"

"Kolya is a very positive and noble person, but he might prove rather wearing," Maria Nikolayevna said, lifting a warning finger. "With his poems and puns. Especially the puns. Did you get a lot of that?"

"We did!"

"Oh, that's terrible!"

"I got used to it, I even liked it," Sonya said carelessly and again she smiled, looking at Andrei. "I heard his poem *Malyuta Skuratov* nearly every evening. I know it by heart now. As for the puns, yes, that went on from morning to night. 'Kolya, where is the tea-towel? 'Do owls tweet?' 'Kolya, take some money from Verochka.' 'Shall I take vera mucha from Verochka?' And so on, ad infinitum."

They all laughed. And Andrei smiled, somewhat wryly.

But all the same Sonya's story was a sad one. So much effort, work, risk, so many days wasted. They had received the news too late and it had been impossible to tunnel far enough to place the mine in the short time left before the tsar's arrival. They had filled in the tunnel, sold what they could, left the shop and split up. The whole thing had been foolish. And now as usual, they were asking indignantly who was to blame. They themselves. They shouldn't have gone to the provinces in the first place. Everything was more difficult there, fewer people, fewer recruits. The tsar must be executed in Petersburg, and nowhere else. Then Sonya asked the questions and was told

the news, about the press in Podolskaya Street, about the trial of Oboleshev and Adrian Mikhailov, which had taken place a fortnight ago. Both had been condemned to death and were now in the Trubetskoi Bastion, where Grishka Goldenberg was. The death sentence had been commuted to twenty years' hard labour. And there was a suspicion, sad though it was to say so, that Adrian, the driver of the famous getaway horse Varvar, had somehow bought this favour.

They walked along the embankment together.

"I shall never leave you again," Sonya said.

He squeezed her arm. How strange that he should now be holding the living Sonya by the arm, walking beside her, and yet even that afternoon he had not known they would meet.

"We must always be together."

"Yes," he said. "No more partings."

"It's sheer madness! How much longer have we left?"

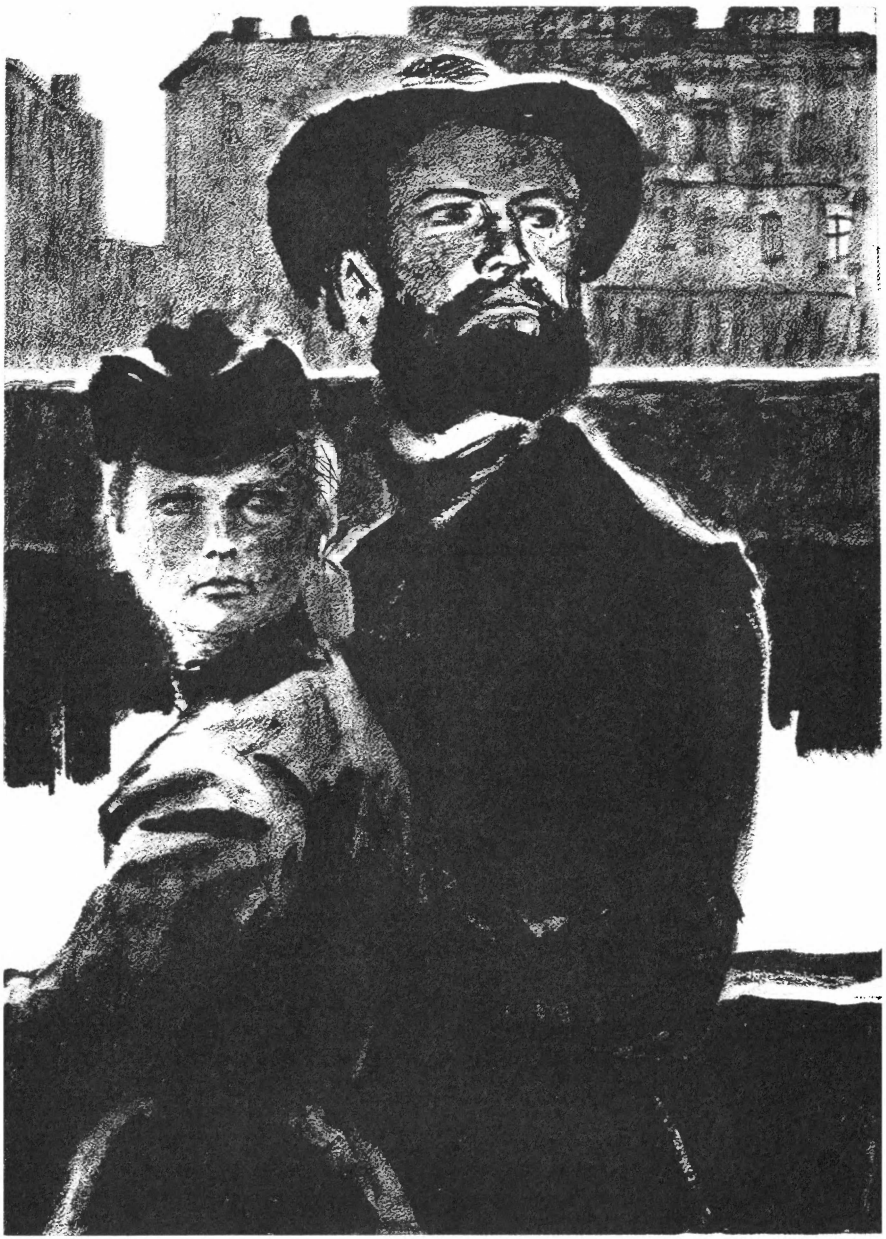
A man in a long coat came swaying towards them. A tramp or a drunkard. In the light of this nocturnal dawn his face was deathly pale. Probably their faces looked the same. The wanderer stared at them like a blind man. When they had gone a few paces Andrei glanced round; the man was walking away.

"We have our whole life left," Andrei said.

"Sometimes I feel as if I had been living for so long, as if I were old and tired out. And sometimes it's as if everything was just beginning. And I have such a desire to live!" Sonya laughed. "And I don't remember anything. As though there had been no past. Today, as I was coming from the station, I drove past our house, father's house, and looked up at the windows and wondered, 'Perhaps mother is there?' I'm fond of mother, I'd like to see her. But all the rest has vanished, it's quite alien to me. I drove past quite calmly, as if it was a stranger's house. But when I was sitting in Alexandrovsky Gardens in Odessa and waiting for your son to pass by—I had found out by some devious means that he would be taken to the tailor's that day to have a sailor's suit made—I got so terribly excited somehow and my heart was thumping in my chest. It seemed almost ridiculous."

"Well, how is he?" Andrei asked, after a pause.

"Very handsome. Such a strong-looking, country colour in his face. And, you know what, he has your walk. He sticks his chest out, holds his head high, it's just killing how like you he is!"



"Who was he with?"

"He was with an elderly lady. Not his mother, of course.... Look round!"

Andrei glanced round and saw that the man in the long coat was walking behind them at a distance of about thirty paces. It looked suspicious and they decided to stop. The wanderer stopped too, as if to light a cigarette. The sulphur matches would not strike and he threw them into the river. Now it was obvious that they were being trailed. It must be one of those night-time spies that roamed the city in the hope of picking up some work.

"There are the new liberal tendencies for you," Andrei said angrily. "Twice as many spies and informers as there were before."

He took Sonya firmly by the arm, as men did on the Nevsky, and at a quick soldier's pace marched her across the road to the houses, where they dived into a gateway.

Zundelevich received Pisemsky's novel *The Storm-Tossed Sea,* read about Grishka and gasped. So that was where the interrogator had learned so much! His knowledge of the Solovyov affair, the meetings in the taverns in Bolshaya Sadovaya, and at the "Severny" in Ofitserskaya, had been especially detailed and terrifying. He had known just what people had said and who said it, about Grishka's departure for Kharkov and what he, Zundelevich, had provided Grishka with before he went. Proclamations about the killing of Kropotkin and the newspaper *Land and Freedom.* Who could have known all this in such detail! Only Grishka, that scoundrel, that effusive idiot. Before he could only guess, but now he had the facts. And the order, to silence him. And it was another shock that Grishka should be here, right beside him, in the Trubetskoi Bastion. On a book that Zundelevich managed by chance to send up to the cell on the first floor he wrote in ink dots, "Death to the traitor".

Grishka was seized by panic. He knew that Zund was in the bastion and started requesting a meeting with him. Now he was in touch not only with Dobrzhinsky but also with Count Plehve, the prosecutor at the Palace of Justice, who was supervising the interrogation. Plehve, a stern-looking gentleman, but as Grishka saw him, understanding and close in his views to

Dobrzhinsky, that is, to the party waging the titanic struggle, nevertheless refused to allow the meeting. But if he did not see Zund and explain matters to him life would be unbearable. On the book that he had received he wrote in dots, "Friends, don't brand me. You must believe me. I have three times risked my life for you and the cause. Believe that I am still the same honest and sincere Grishka."

There was no response. Then Grishka played a trick; he began to say that if he was allowed to meet Zundelevich he would be able to persuade him to act as he, Grishka, had done and this would be of great use to the investigators because Zundelevich was a big gun in the movement. He also promised to persuade Ludwig Kobylyansky, his partner in the Kropotkin affair, who was also imprisoned in the fortress. Permission was given. Grishka and Zundelevich met during the exercise period. Zund was unrecognisably thin, pale, and had grown a blackish-red beard. He looked at Grishka without any expression, as though at a complete stranger. He did not move a step and his glance was icily cold and contemptuous. It was the glance of the Zund of the distant past, from the Rabbi's school in Vilna, where the most learned Talmudists were filled with the pride of their own great erudition. Grishka rushed up to Zund and began to explain with all his usual reckless haste. He spoke in the Odessa jargon. The warder in attendance understood nothing. Grishka blurted out the main thing: it had all been done to save Russia, to stop bloodshed, to prevent, to understand, to reconcile, and even if his name was to be cursed today, the Russia of the future would thank him.

"You are mad," Zund said. "They have made an utter idiot of you. They're going to use your denunciations to kill us—you want to be thanked for that? You are a traitor a thousand times!"

And Zund walked away without listening to another word.

This was the beginning of that insanity which overtook Grishka before he died. No, he was of sound mind and clear memory, but when he observed himself he had the feeling of being quite mad. And he began to beg Plehve, Dobrzhinsky and, through them, Loris-Melikov to put him in the same cell as Zundelevich. Plehve promised—although it would be extremely difficult and against the rules—to obtain that permission in return for more and more fresh information. He was

shaking the last crumbs out of Grishka. And Grishka agreed, gave up everything he had, remembered, strained his memory desperately for the sake of this one thing—to meet Zund again and explain everything to him. This was his dream. When he went out in the yard for exercise he would drop notes scratched on his cardboard cigarette-holders, hoping that one of them might reach his comrades. He dropped about a dozen, all with the same message: "My friends, don't brand me, don't shame me with the name of traitor; if I have become the victim of deception, you are the victims of my stupidity. I am still your honest Grishka, devoted to you with all my heart. I have lived for six years by my thoughts and love of you, I still live by them now...."

There was no response. Grishka's madness was self-knowledge. This is what drives people mad, when they suddenly understand something about themselves that they have never understood before. He demanded paper and on the first sheet wrote, "Confession. Friends, companions, comrades, honest people I know and have yet to know all over the world...."

This was the story of his whole life, of the great deception, the betrayal, the misfortune, and the longer he wrote and the more he went into detail, the calmer he became. It had all began with Fedka Kuritsyn. "Because of my trust in people, because of my accursed sentimental character.... He told me that he was going to be released and I, carried away by love of my comrades and wishing to give them my greetings, gave him their names and they were arrested...."

While Grishka was working with inspiration on the "Confession" he was unexpectedly visited again by Loris-Melikov accompanied by an impressive-looking gentleman. Dobrzhinsky afterwards explained that this was Schmidt, the head of the Third Section. This time Grishka experienced no excitement or even the slightest pride in talking to the Count. The reason for the visit was the forthcoming trial. Loris-Melikov said that death sentences were inevitable.

Grishka talked to the Count as if in a dream. He wanted only one thing—a meeting with Zundelevich. Not necessarily in the cell, not for a whole night, let it be in the prison yard, during exercise, for a few minutes, in the presence of anyone they liked to appoint.

The Count explained, piercing Grishka with his black

Caucasian eyes, what and how he was to speak about at the trial.

"Oh yes! Yes indeed, Your Highness! Most certainly! Yes, I shall!..." Grishka nodded, scarcely hearing or understanding.

When the Count had left, Grishka wrote him a letter requesting that no lenience should be shown to him at the forthcoming trial. It was June, he could not sleep, he just worked. At the beginning of July the "Confession" was nearly finished. Everything, his strength, his desire to live was also coming to an end. He was allowed another meeting with Zundelevich. The prosecutor Dobrzhinsky stood by and listened insolently. Being an Odessa man, he probably knew something of the jargon.

Zund was a little gentler this time, there was a spark of sympathy in his eyes. And he did not snatch his hand away when Grishka rushed to shake it.

"Loris-Melikov has been to see me. I've gone dizzy..." Grishka muttered, making strange faces. "Who else would be granted such an honour?"

"Not you alone."

"Who else, then?"

"Adrian Mikhailov. Loris saw him in May, I know that from reliable people. Adrian is in cell No. 42. He was in Queer Street, now he's going to do hard. So it was not for nothing; an exchange of goods took place."

"They will execute me with everybody else!" Grishka blazed. "I have demanded it myself!"

"You have executed dozens of people," Zund said. "The executioner Frolov of today is you, Grishka Goldenberg."

Grishka stood in petrified silence. When Dobrzhinsky turned his well-shaven, ruddy gingerish face away in response to a shout from the window, Grishka shook his fist at him and whispered, "That's the one that ruined me!"

July 15, 1880, was a very hot day, the overheated cell became unbearably stuffy, life was draining away. Grishka made a noose out of his towel and tied the other end to the tap over the wash-basin. On the report of Grishka's suicide Alexander II wrote, "Much to be regretted!" The revolutionaries learned of what had happened the next day from Bogorodsky and sighed with relief; the execution had taken place. All that would remain of this ill-starred traitor at the trial would be paper.

AND YET ANOTHER VOICE: M. P. DRAGOMANOV

I, Dragomanov, Mikhail Petrovich, while living in Geneva, in the early summer of 1880 unexpectedly received a letter from Andrei Zhelyabov. The messenger who brought the letter from Petersburg undoubtedly belonged to the newest type of Russian nihilists, to the so-called Social-Revolutionary Party, which over the past year had won renown by its audacious and bloody exploits. My attitude to revolutionaries of this type is well known. We differ on many points: Great Russian Centralism, Narodnik illusions, Machiavellism in the means adopted (such as the faked manifestos of Y. Stefanofich, the robbing of banks, treasuries and post-offices involving the murder of the guards) and, above all, the elevation of political killings to a principle of struggle. As long ago as 1878 in the *Gromada Supplement* I had analysed the terrorist proclamation "A Death for a Death", and in the year when the messenger arrived from Petersburg I had published a booklet *Terrorism and Freedom.* So it was all the more surprising to receive a message from Andrei Zhelyabov, whom I knew from the old days as a radical, and later as one of the leaders—I had no authentic knowledge of this but the rumours came from an authoritative source—one of the atamans of the terrorist party.

And while I was making my guest comfortable at a table by the window, giving him coffee and providing him with newspapers and magazines so that he should not be bored while I was reading—but he, like everyone else in the first hours of their arrival in this city had no time for newspapers and was putting his head out of the window and gazing eagerly at the street, the roofs, the shimmering Rhone in the distance—I recalled my meetings with Zhelyabov. There had been two of them. The first was in the autumn of 1873, in Kiev, at the flat of an old acquaintance of mine, where we tried to attune our views and achieve unity of action between the radicals and the Ukrainophiles. The attempt came to nothing.

The second meeting occurred in the winter of 1875, at a meeting of the committee that was sending volunteers to Herzogovina. Zhelyabov was quite a different man. He was animated, spoke loudly, imperiously, and one could feel in everything a persistent desire and ability to act. He had already been involved in the Big Trial but was still, temporarily at any rate, at liberty. Who else was there? Two Serbs,

three Ukrainians, one Pole, a very interesting man by the name of Magiar, and I, who had been allowed to attend the meeting as representative of another, similar committee consisting entirely of Ukrainians. I remember how Zhelyabov took Magiar to task about the young Poles. Why were they cool towards the Russian socialist movement? Magiar said that the Poles felt too deeply about the national-political question and could not at present devote themselves like the Russians to a purely economic, social trend.

"Then propound your national-political question!" Zhelyabov exclaimed heatedly.

This started an argument and I added fuel to the fire by saying that one must first understand that there was a Polish nation and that the Poles should seek not a historical but an ethnographical Poland. Zhelyabov supported me and Magiar, when taking his leave, said, "Everything takes time, gentlemen, time!" When he had gone, Zhelyabov remarked with an angry sneer, "That's what they're always like!"

I clearly remember that face of his and his angry expression. He was incensed that the Poles, even such radical ones as Magiar, could not understand that the historical dream of recovering the Right Bank of the Dnieper was of no help at all in the struggle to overthrow Russian absolutism, and besides, he was extremely impatient in the very nature of his thinking. He always wanted to decide everything at a stroke, fundamentally and as soon as possible. I had another argument with him, this time about the socialist ideal, and I said in my usual fashion, "Shcho tseh dilo zatyazhne!* He gave a condescending laugh, considering me, of course, an opportunist. Four and a half years passed. I was living in Europe and he was there, amid the Russian whirlpools, which were becoming more and more threatening and ominous, and he himself, no doubt, was stirring them up like Sadko the *gusli*-player at the bottom of the sea. Well, what could he write from there, from the seabed?

"Monday, May 12, 1880.

"Much esteemed Mikhail Petrovich,

"Twice before this we were able to meet each other. Now I

* Ukrainian, "This is going to take a long time."—*Tr.*

have occasion to write to you, and still under the most unusual circumstances. I remember our first meeting in 1873, in Kiev, at the flat of X and Y. There was a group of old, indeed ancient nihilists sitting at a cobbler's table, diligently studying the trade. The slogan then was "going among the people" for an honest life of toil.... The programme of the magazine *Forward* had been read and acknowledged as desirable. 'But what was the reality?' everyone was asking himself and hurried to plunge into this unknown popular sea. Yes, what a grand time it was!... Then came the winter of 1875 to 1876. The prisons were full to overflowing; hundreds of lives were broken; but the movement had not stopped; only the method of struggle had changed and, instead of propagandising scientific socialism, the protagonists, having learned from experience, proposed agitation by word and deed on the basis of popular demands. At that time the Ukrainian Gromada stirred into life and, true to its basic principle of love of the people, conceived a whole series of measures to benefit its native Ukraine. That winter you visited ... and we met again.... Has so much time really passed, when one thinks of it? But how many changes have there been!... To take just this small corner of the land.... I saw the flowering of the Gromada in those days and its vital undertakings. There slowly but surely two revolutionary streams were merging into one—the general Russian stream and the Ukrainian; not federation, but unity was at hand, and suddenly ... everything was scattered to the winds. The old men were tempted by the advantage of a legal position. They hesitated to leave their well-warmed nests and some fine people were lost to the struggle; their initiatives perished. In their place crude violence insolently celebrated its victory. But what upset this triumph of the gloating victors? What sowed panic among them? Was it conscience that had wakened in these ruthless oppressors? The remnants of the Narodnik-revolutionaries began an offensive, but now according to a new plan of struggle. The cowardly tyrants instinctively realised that their weak spot had been exposed, that their power and their very lives were at stake. Like a wild beast aware of a deep wound the government went on the rampage, lashing out at friends and foes alike, but the inaccessible sword of Damocles still hung threateningly above it.... Heads in high places have begun to ponder. Should not some concession be made? The government now sees clearly what its position is,

everyone believes its days are numbered; it has no moral support from anyone; only cowardice, selfishness and the inability to act together in some and a divided understanding of aims among others prevent the government's downfall. Policy demands a timely concession on some plausible pretext; but this is not the desire of the power-loving old man or, so rumour has it, his son. Hence the ambivalence, the wavering in internal policy. With a view to depriving revolution of support, Loris has generated hopes but, being unable to satisfy them, he will bring about even greater disillusionment. What a fitting moment for summing up results! And yet everyone is silent; silent when active sympathy for the revolution is most essential, when two or three pushes, with general support, would bring the government down. Not much is to be expected from a society that has ever been flabby; but even the Russian revolutionaries—what percentage of them are engaged in active struggle? Disagreement over the understanding of immediate tasks....

"Cannot even you, Mikhail Petrovich, acknowledge the immediate and real benefits accruing to the people from our struggle? Surely this cannot be so; your literary works, your responsiveness to any living cause, your love of the practical solution are all in our favour. Unfortunately, lack of time and also the cost of certain urgent undertakings have prevented our making any journeys for organisational purposes and, in particular, to defend our programme, while the loss of our printing press has deprived us of the opportunity of explaining it in print. The result is that its commentators in general, and abroad almost exclusively, are people who are either wholely or to a great extent opposed to it. We should be extremely interested to know your personal opinion of the programme and it would be a very good thing if you would send a criticism of it through Z. Z. until direct contact has been established between us or, perhaps, you have become a contributor to the *People's Will.* This is the first point I have to write about on the instructions of my comrades. The second point: you will, of course, agree to sway public opinion in Europe in our favour, as to which the bearer of this letter will inform you in detail. Third point: your position as representative of the Ukrainian revolutionary trend, as a figure well known in Russia, as a revolutionary with an exceptional past, makes it incumbent upon you, Mikhail Petrovich, to take an active part in the vital

affairs of your country. It is not for nothing that in the Ukraine many call you "Batko"!* But what are they doing? And who is to blame but they? We, convinced autonomists, are accused of centralism ... because of our support for a Constituent Assembly. First, they refused to understand that a Constituent Assembly in our eyes would be only a liquidating commission, and second, can one put down in a programme of immediate demands things that have no real support but do have deadly enemies? Where are our Fenians, our Parnell? The state of affairs is such that one proceeds from the real interests of the peasantry, acknowledges its economic emancipation as a most essential good, and yet gives priority to political demands, sees salvation in the disintegration of the empire into autonomous parts and demands a Constituent Assembly. The ascetic, the preserver of a social ideal, performs no great service to his country. We, at any rate, would prefer to be of the laity.

"And one more request to you, Mikhail Petrovich! Would you not agree to become the curator of our archives? There is some most valuable material here for the history of the contemporary movement, and yet it is being lost almost periodically. We propose such a curatorship to you on the following conditions: (1) we retain the right of ownership of the archives; not a single item may be alienated from them; (2) as regards use, the material will be divided into two parts, one of which you would be able to use freely; the other would be connected with living people and current affairs; this you would be able to use only after receiving our permission in each specific case; (3) you may place the archives in the care of someone else with our consent; (4) we (the editors of the *People's Will*) would be identified by a coded pass-word of which you know the cypher-key...."

The cypher-key to which he referred was, as a matter of fact, unknown to me. But that was of no importance. The letter struck me as a somewhat agitated piece of work, written hurriedly, emotionally and in that peculiar disjointed colloquial *Zhelyabov* style (he used to speak like this in Kiev!), in which thoughts overtake words and there is much sincerity but also much contradiction and confusion. It contained certain vaguely hinted regrets about past arguments and a request

* Ukrainian—"Father"—*Ed.*

for help, a desire for reconciliation and some rather crude flattery (I was a "revolutionary with an exceptional past") and even a certain familiarity ("makes it incumbent upon you, Mikhail Petrovich, to take an active part...").

Oho, what style of talking would you adopt with me if I were in Russia! However, I have interrupted myself. It is all very well to discuss the agitatedness or carelessness of a letter while one is sitting here, on a Geneva balcony....

We talked about Loris-Melikov. I said that I had written an article called "Nightingales Are Not Fed on Fairy-Tales" about the count's appointment as Russian dictator and that I considered his promises mere empty chatter. Zhelyabov's envoy agreed with me. But then we began to talk about what divided us: the political killings, the party's morality, which I couldn't understand, and the most terrifying idea embodied in the activity of the terrorist party, the idea that the individual can take the law into his own hands.

Can one fight arbitrary rule by means of arbitrary rule? I also made fun of the name, "Social-Revolutionary Party". One might as well talk of a "furniture-hatcheting shop". And finally—about Parnell and the Fenians.

"Andrei Ivanovich is wrong to call me a Parnell," I said. "And if he is upset because we, Ukrainian federalists, do not possess 'our own' Fenians, I personally am not in the least put out by this fact. They are engaged in the 'hatchet' work that I dislike."

My guest from Petersburg turned out to be unexpectedly inclined to make concessions and agreed with much of what I said. He said that Taras (Zhelyabov) had not so much called me Parnell; it was rather that he himself regarded this Irishman as a model. He dreamed of a Constituent Assembly where he would play the role of a Parnell, and just as Parnell relied on the secret power of the Fenians, so he, Taras, would rely on the underground might of his party. Was this true? It looked rather as if it was. I never had a chance to talk to Andrei Zhelyabov; he perished nine months after I read his letter, but everything that happened on the eve of his destruction and for several years afterwards—the wave of blood, the hangings and killings that rolled across Russia as it did across Ireland—showed everyone that the Irish Fenians and the Russian People's Will bore a fatal resemblance to each other. Do you remember how the Fenians blasted the wall of a prison?

And the attacks on the prison vans? The murder of Lord Cavendish and his secretary Burke? The killing of magistrates? The reprisals against traitors? All this, as in Russia, was accompanied, of course, by the scaffold and the firing squad, but the general uprising—which was what the hot-heads in Ireland and in Russia had been hoping for—could not be raised, nothing of the kind happened. And now, in 1889, when here in Bulgaria I recall the unfortunate Russian Fenians, the uprising is still as far away as ever. They brought nothing nearer, only made it more remote.

What could I reply to this envoy from Petersburg? I felt in advance the torments of these people, I saw their future saint-hood, I admired their energy, but I could not say that I was with them because they could not understand the main thing: *shcho tseh dilo zatyazhne.* Making some tactful excuse, I refused to sway Europe in favour of the People's Will or undertake to be their representative. The envoy, I believe, was not very disappointed and we went on chatting for some time about this and that, the best place to stay, the best shop for wine or tobacco, which Russians one could be friendly with and which were best avoided. Then we went out for a stroll, it was a lovely evening and we had a long walk down the boulevard as far as the Rhone, across the bridge and then along the embankment to the park of Mon Repos.

Chapter Eight

On May 22nd, the Empress Maria Alexandrovna died. This was no surprise. The Empress had been hopelessly ill for a long time, but death came suddenly; there was not even time to call the children. The tsar was at Tsarskoye Selo. Six weeks later he secretly married Princess Dolgorukaya. Nobody knew anything about this except his most devoted friends, Count Adlerberg and Generals Ryleyev and Baranov; the two last were best men at the wedding. The marriage ceremony took place in an isolated hall of the Tsarskoye Selo Grand Palace quite unbeknown to the officers of the guard, the servants or even General Rebinder, the Palace commandant. Alexander wore the blue uniform of the Guards Hussars, and Dolgorukaya a plain woollen dress in beige.

Staring glassily at the young couple, the archpriest proclaimed:

"Slave of God, the faithful and devoted sovereign emperor Alexander Nikolayevich is wed to slave of God Yekaterina Mikhailovna." But the customary "now you must kiss" was more than the archpriest could bring himself to utter.

A few days later Alexander summoned Loris-Melikov. The Count's report, a very serious and substantial one, containing fundamental proposals that Alexander had already acquainted himself with, was a matter of secondary importance and priority was accorded to informing the Count of what had happened on July 19th. The heir to the throne, who was taking a cure at Bad Hapsal remained in ignorance. Russia knew nothing and suspected nothing. The court would be astonished a month later when Princess Dolgorukaya—now Her Royal Highness the Princess Yuryevskaya—would set out for Livadia in the same train as the tsar! Only one man, Loris-Melikov, could provide the delicate advice that was needed in this confused situation. The tsar waited impatiently. Even Loris's enemies must be gritting their teeth and saying, "Thou hast won, Galilean!" Peace reigned throughout the land. There had been no attempts at assassination for six months and nothing had been heard either of any more petty offences by these criminals. Whereas on March 1 there had been 1,087 cases of state crimes in various stages of investigation throughout the empire, this number had now been halved to only 500. That fact came from Loris's own report. The number of cases to be reviewed had also considerably decreased, to 65. Splendid! For the first time in recent years order had been restored in this sphere. Loris had also reduced the number of people under surveillance—despite resistance from the Third Section—by proving that the present system was not capable of keeping so many people under observation and this led to an increase in escapes and disappearances. The fingers should not be stretched to grasp as many as possible, but clenched into a fist and held tight. So Loris was concentrating on the main thing, unity of action between the gendarmerie, the police and the judicial organs. He had even said that the Supreme Administrative Commission had performed its function, and like the Third Section should be abolished. Power should be concentrated in the hands of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Bravo! A bold step! Loris's ill-wishers would again say

that he was playing up to the public, courting popularity, as they had said when he threw Count Tolstoy out of his post as Minister of Public Education, when he made an auditing inspection of the Third Section or paid out 2,500 rubles in grants to students. One could say what one liked, but the truth was obvious; for the first time after its nightmarish experiences Russia was beginning to breathe freely. And how clearly now could one see the depth of insight that had placed this Caucasian General at the helm of state!

When Loris came in Alexander made him swear that what he was told would remain a secret. Then he announced his new marriage. Loris listened with a most intelligent, all-comprehending, sympathetic and brotherly expression on his face.

"Mikhail Tarielovich, you more than anyone else know that my life is in danger. I may be killed tomorrow. If that, God forbid, should happen, do not abandon those who are dear to me. I am counting on you."

Devotedly and in a silence befitting the moment Loris-Melikov bowed his head. Cunning fellow that he was, he preferred not to disturb with words this delicate matter in which any movement might wound the sovereign. But Alexander could not resist extracting from this most intelligent of men some opinion, not about his action, of course, but about what might be the sequel.

"You must confess that you are somewhat surprised?"

"Your Majesty's nobleness of heart can surprise no one; being infinite it is always natural."

"But you, as an intelligent person, Mikhail Tarielovich, cannot be unaware," Alexander continued, becoming slightly irritated, "that not everyone will display such cool composure as you on hearing of this event."

"All is fitting for the faithful servant," Loris replied with a proverb. His brown face seemed to grow hard and tense. "If I am to speak seriously, Your Majesty, this is the most appropriate moment to introduce the changes that have been proposed. One impression weakens another."

They began to discuss practical matters. As he paged through the report, "Far be it from me to entertain the thought that the criminal activity of the Social-Revolutionary Party has ended. Even less would I ascribe exclusively to the labours of the Commission...." Alexander was thinking not so much of what he read—he had read and considered all this before—as

about Loris, of whom he thought with a special relaxed pleasure. What a lucid mind! Naturally, the Minister of Internal Affairs was to be Loris himself. Kakhanov and Cherevin would be his assistants. Excellent candidates, men of real efficiency, and the best guarantee of their efficiency was Loris's recommendation. The functions of the Third Section would be transferred to the department of police. What a noble person he was! That honest soldier's heart! He preferred to renounce the unlimited power conferred on him by the Supreme Commission and relegate himself to the rank of Minister....

"Do you not feel, Mikhail Tarielovich, that you will be somewhat reduced in rank?"

"I think of being useful to our cause, not of a rank, Your Majesty."

Well said. A fine answer. If only everyone in Russia thought of what use he could be, the country would go far.

Some days later his heir arrived from Bad Hapsal. It was a painful conversation. But eventually everything was settled and finished with, forgotten, and on August 17th, Alexander and Princess Yuryevskaya with the two elder children set out—to the astonishment of courtiers, adjutants and secretaries—in the same train together for the Crimea.

The morning of August 17th was clear and rather cold. There was a hint of autumn in the air. Andrei felt shivery. He had got up early, after a sleepless night, walked down the long Voznesensky Avenue, the Fontanka embankment, and without hurrying—he had forced himself not to hurry because he could not appear at the bridge before the appointed time—came out into the deserted, cleanly swept Gorokhovaya Street. The tsar's street! It was the tsar's habit to gallop along this street from the palace to Tsarskoye Selo station and from the station to the palace. Way back at the beginning of summer the Janitor had noticed that this was a splendid street. The splendid thing about it was the old arched bridge, a stone one, that carried the street across the Yekaterininsky Canal. The Janitor had gone off urgently to the south, still on the same mission—to obtain the money bequeathed by Lizogub, and the planting of the mine under the bridge had been entrusted to Zhelyabov.

In July, they had boated along the canal, singing songs,

playing the fool, shouting jokes to the women rinsing their washing from the rafts, and at the same time inspecting the height of the arch, the stonework, and sounding the bottom. It was a good depth, too deep for an oar to reach. On that first reconnoitre in July there had been Barannikov, Presnyakov, a lad from Odessa Makar Teterka, an old acquaintance of Andrei's, Grachevsky and Andrei himself, which made five. And there had also been Vaska Merkulov, the sixth, also a lad from Odessa, who had just arrived with Vera. Where were they to put the dynamite? That took some thinking about. The stonework was massive, you could not put a mine in there without a great deal of work, drilling and noise, and no noise could be made in Gorokhovaya Street because there were spies all around. Andrei suggested that he would climb under the arch with a box of dynamite, hold on somehow and blow himself up with it. He made the suggestion simply, in a business-like manner, and it was discussed in a business-like manner. How much would the party gain, how much would it lose? What was the risk? The technicians Kibalchich and Grishka Isayev said that Andrei would be killed for sure but it was not clear whether the tsar would be killed. The probability was not very great. Kibalchich calculated that not less than about two hundred and twenty pounds of dynamite would be needed. Who could hold a weight like that? And in what kind of box? Andrei glanced at Sonya: her face was like death, and when Kibalchich spoke it suddenly flushed pink. But she did not say a word, did not even look at him. It was decided to lower the dynamite to the bottom. It should be packed in gutta-percha bags and sunk under the arch. A few days later, Presnyakov, Teterka and Andrei took out a boat, loaded it with four gutta-percha bags, covered them with sacking and made for the coast, then they entered the Fontanka Canal and rowed along the embankment of Galerny Island. It was a hot day and the local people were keeping to the shady side of the streets. They entered the Kryukov Canal and turned slowly to the right into the Yekaterininsky. Presnyakov, reclining in the stern, was particularly cheerful for some reason. He whistled and exchanged banten with the women on the bank, quite unlike his usual gloomy self. And all this left a memorable picture in the mind—the glitter of the sunshine, the creak of oars, the smell of the sackcloth, and Presnyakov's thin jolly face. They glided into the shade of the bridge. Andrei quickly

heaved the bags that were connected together with wire overboard, kept the end of the wire in his hand and when they tied up at the nearby laundry, Presnyakov jumped out of the boat on to the raft to keep a look-out for policemen while Andrei fixed the wire to the underside of the raft.

Presnyakov was whistling, "Way down Shpalernaya in a little tavern...."

Makar Teterka was obviously keyed up. He hardly spoke and rode for all he was worth, looking at Andrei and wrinkling his already wrinkled and pock-marked face with a kind of tense, wordless devotion. Makar was a man to be trusted. Back in Odessa Andrei had realised that; he was from a poor Cossack family, a woodcarver by trade who liked "art work" and had even studied in Odessa at a sculptor's studio. But Makar's great and fanatical love was for the future socialism about which he had read many books, for the revolution and, to be more exact, for the people of the revolution. If Andrei had said to him then, "Jump into that canal, Makar, and take that wire between your teeth," he would have done it without thinking twice.... His arrival in summer had been a real godsend. They were running short of people. He remembered Presnyakov now with his whistling and fooling around because it was the last time he had seen him. On July 24th, Andrei Presnyakov, the "spy ripper", had been seized in Sredny Avenue—one of the workers had given him away and there was a suspicion of who it had been because the policeman had been in plain clothes and helped by a porter and a janitor. Presnyakov had opened fire and wounded two of them, one of them mortally. According to Kletochnikov's information, the porter had died a week ago in hospital. But all the same poor Andrei had been overpowered.

And at the beginning of July Vanichka Okladsky had been arrested. This was really quite strange. Vanichka had lived with a faked passport under the name of Ivan Petrovich Sidorenko. He had led a very quiet and careful life that could not have awakened the authorities' suspicions. And suddenly he was arrested! Kletochnikov had not been able to find out so far, but apparently it had something to do with a check-up on passports. There was even a rumour that the city police had decided to examine the passports of all new arrivals in the city, in other words, make inquiries of the provincial issuing authorities. The news of all these novel tricks and wiles of

Loris-Melikov's made Andrei rage. And this sweet-voiced policeman was regarded as a liberal! He was desperately sorry for Presnyakov and Vanichka. Their main strength had been their contacts with the workers, particularly Presnyakov's. Admittedly some new helpers had appeared on the scene—Makar and Vaska. Valentin Kokovsky—and some old friends—Andrei Franzholi, Martin Langans, both utterly devoted, had turned up again. But where could one ever find such an iron hand, such clear-headed ruthlessness? And these troubles had been augmented by others. A month ago he had at last received news from Europe—Dragomanov's answer. No, the Ukrainian "Batko" would not consent to represent the People's Will abroad. He had to excuse himself on the grounds of a great burden of research work and not very good health. Instead they had appointed Lev Hartmann as the party's representative in Europe. Of course, he did not have the prestige, the possibilities, or the contacts, but there was no alternative. On the other hand, he was their man through and through. It was a pity about the letter to the "Batko"—he had certainly done a bit of bowing and scraping! Sonya had said at once that he would not agree. Various suppositions were made as to the reasons, which might have been Dragomanov's stubborn federalism, his well-known Russophobia, his age, health, character....

But in addition to all the other possible reasons Andrei conceived of yet another, the most poisonous of all—the element of disbelief. They were failing all along the line, everything was going wrong. Five shots, almost point-blank, and not one had hit the mark. The train with the tsar's retinue in it had been blasted off the rails, another blast had shattered the palace guard room. And still the situation was as stagnant as a bog, not even a ripple on the surface. Just a bog.

They must have it, they needed it as badly as oxygen, this unobtainable, mystical *gingerbread!* Otherwise they were finished, the whole thing was pointless. They would become absurd bunglers, the laughing-stock of history.

But if the *gingerbread* succeeded, everything would be justified, would change instantly, because this was what people were longing for, perhaps unconsciously, everywhere, and the clinging mire would begin to stir and Europe would make a move, and Dragomanov would kick himself, "Why didn't I agree to support such people?" Oh no, it's too late now, dear

Mikhail Petrovich, you should have thought of that before; but now—we are very sorry—we have other plans.

Thinking of something especially unpleasant, like Dragomanov's answer—he had not even sent a letter, just an oral message!—Andrei did not notice that he was walking faster than he should be.

He must not appear at the Kamenny Bridge before half past seven. He stopped, looked round like a street lounger and strolled unhurriedly along the same embankment towards the Chernyshev Bridge. Now his excitement was mounting and he could think of nothing else. He and Makar had agreed to meet at the Chernyshev Bridge and go on from there to the Kamenny, to the rafts. They would sit down there and wash some potatoes. Makar was to bring a basket of potatoes and Andrei, his worker's tool-bag, where he would be concealing an electric battery. That was how it had been decided. The job would be done by the two of them, he and Makar. Andrei was to connect the wires to the battery. At the Chernyshev Bridge, however, Makar was nowhere to be seen.

Andrei strolled up and down the embankment, trying not to show his impatience and growing alarm. What had happened? Had they arrested him during the night? It was half past seven, he would have to dash headlong for the Kamenny Bridge, otherwise it would be too late. Suppose Makar had mixed things up and gone straight to the Kamenny? He had not been in Petersburg long, often got mixed up and lost his way. But if Andrei made a dash for it now, Makar might appear at the Chernyshev Bridge, find no one there and be quite at a loss. Andrei did not know what to do. At twenty to eight he set off at a run towards the Kamenny, abandoning Makar and his potatoes—the hell with them, there was no time now for camouflage!—and suddenly a shout of "Taras!" stopped him.

Makar had appeared with a huge basket in his right hand that made him bend sideways, with his left he was waving to Andrei. He ran up, sweating and dishevelled.

"What the...." Anger gripped Andrei's throat.

"I haven't got a watch.... I... I got the time wrong..." Teterka mumbled.

"You damn fool!" Andrei snapped. "Come on!"

They set off at a brisk pace, almost running along the embankment. Makar panted and gasped, Andrei clenched his fists. Oh God, if only Presnyakov were here! Or

anyone—Stepan, the Janitor, even Vanka Okladsky.... They had no people, there just was not anyone. He was to blame himself, he ought to have taken Semyon or Grachevsky, they had volunteered. Well, here was the Kamenny Bridge, that hump-backed arch. And there was the tsar galloping over it. The horses were flying along at a wild, joyful gallop, there was a flash of patent-leather, of something black, something red, the cloaks of the Cossacks. They passed in a moment and disappeared, on their way to the Crimea, to the warm sea.

"Well, that's that, my friend," Andrei said. "We fooled ourselves nicely...."

Makar suddenly dropped the basket, buried his face in his hands and sank down on his haunches. Was he crying? Anger and pity welled up in Andrei, but not for him, not for this weeping fellow with his little wrinkled, habitual muddler's face, but for himself, for all those who with such yearning, such hope were doing all they could without grudging life or death.

A few days later they rowed under the bridge late at night—the nights were darker now—and tried to raise the gutta-percha bags from the bottom with hooks. They tried for a long time but without success and rowed away empty-handed. Andrei was gloomy. Nothing would go right, things were breaking up and time was running out, they were losing their people. The only gleam of joy came at the end of summer when the second issue of the *People's Will Newssheet* came out with an article about Loris. It had been written by Mikhailovsky, and it was really biting. "...A grateful Russia will portray the Count in his general-adjutant's uniform but with a wolf's jaws in front and a fox's tail behind." The analysis of Loris's activity was excellent. The liberal promises were fanfared, but what happened in practice? Banishments, spying, women insulted in the remand prisons, Malinovskaya had gone mad.... Well the *Newssheet* was out. That would make a stir and spoil the Count's and some other people's mood, give them headaches, heart attacks, chest spasms—but where did the party go from there?

By September, Andrei's thoughts—still as gloomy as ever—had begun to take a new direction. From all sides news was coming in of food shortages, lack of fodder and epidemics. Famine might prove to be a true ally of the revolution. The

idea of a peasant uprising had appealed to Andrei even before. He had seen himself as a new Pugachev, but it had never seemed anything but a dream. The people were clamped to the soil, they were soggy and immobile, only now there seemed to be some stirring—because of misfortune, starvation!—and so hope flared anew. Andrei went about gathering what information he could, he questioned the peasants, the craftsmen, the traders at the market, the cabmen and minor officials, the vagabonds in the taverns. The picture of Russian life that emerged was rather grim. The Janitor, who had just come back from the south, said that in Yekaterinoslav Province the peasants of many villages had abandoned everything and were roaming about with their families. There was famine in the Samara country. Saratov, Kamyshin, Tsaritsyn were full of people from the surrounding districts looking for work, but there was no work to be had. In the south the crops had been ravaged by locusts and beetles, the grain harvest had been wiped out and the cattle decimated. In Orel Province people were living on chaff, and in Perm the Tatars faced starvation....

And added to this there were the epidemics! An official, a Ukrainian from the Poltava region, spoke of the agonies caused by diphtheria; hundreds were dying in the villages. A student from among his new acquaintances, Kolya Rysakov, had spent the vacation at home somewhere up north, where the pests had devastated the crops and people were going down with anthrax, the Siberian plague. The bodies were being buried in a casual fashion; he himself had seen the way a mere sprinkling of earth was thrown over them, just to satisfy the inspectors. So what better time could there be for rebellion? All Russia's rebellions had been started by famine or cholera. There had been some outbreaks already, where conditions were unbearable—in the Western territories, the Chernigov and Smolensk districts. Now the trouble would break out over the working of border land, now over the inventorisation of peasant property. In the Velikiye Luki Uyezd there had been a battle with a strong force of soldiery; a sergeant-major had been shot dead, a policeman clubbed, and there were many wounded.

And Andrei saw quite clearly in his mind's eye that if this great sea was stirred up—by some mighty slogan, by a leader's example, by the *gingerbread,* by yet another unsuccessful

war—nothing would stop it; it would sweep away the towns with their Kremlins, tear down bridges and carry all before it. In the June issue of the *Juridical Messenger* the crime news columns stated quite openly that the villages were starving and poverty-striken and it was from them that these hordes of ragged, unwashed vagrants without money or passports were rolling across Russia. "They crowd the wharves, they die in the work gangs. It is said that the wild beast has its lairs and holes, but these brutalised people have nothing. Siberia holds no terrors for them; that is where they are making for. The starving man fears nothing." Yes, these peasants who had been cheated and robbed, these wild fierce men of the factories—that was the army! Take command of such a force, march it against Petersburg and the empire would totter.

"What about dropping the assassination attempts for a while ... what about it? What do you think?" He had not consulted anybody yet or even expressed this seditious thought. He confided first in Sonya. "Will I be anathematised by our orthodox members?"

In October, they had taken a flat together, near the first company of the Izmailov Regiment. It was quite small, two rooms and a kitchen, but the convenient thing was that one door gave out on to the street and the other into the yard, and from the yard there was an entrance into a tobacconist's. Sonya had taken up residence as Voinova, and he as her brother Slatvinsky, Nikolai Ivanovich. "What shall we decide, Gospozha Voinova? Where shall we head for now? More digging and making dynamite or back to the old slogan of rousing the people?" Sonya, too, had been wearied by failures. She said she was ready to go with him anywhere, to the Volga, to the Don, but the Committee would probably decide otherwise.

Andrei demanded an immediate meeting of the Committee.

The next day all members who were in town were informed. No one but Sonya suspected the reason for this urgent meeting. They knew only that it had been called at Taras's request. Andrei began with a brief survey of the peasants' situation and the rebellious mood they were in, and said that in his opinion Russia was nearer to rebellion than ever before. He spoke commandingly, confidently, strode back and forth before the table, where the others sat and listened in silence.

"If we stand aside now, if we don't rise to these new feelings and respond to them—that is, if we don't help the people

overthrow the power that is stifling them—the Russian people will not forgive us. We shall lose all significance in their eyes and never regain it. The peasants must be made to realise that the person who rules the country autocratically is responsible for the life and welfare of the population—responsible on pain of death, you understand? And this gives them the right to rebel, if the government can't defend the people from famine and extinction. And if, in addition, it refuses to help the people with state funds. It is our duty to seize this historic chance. To make use of the famine, the starvation, the plague, the bugs and locusts, the lack of fodder and loss of cattle. All this is grist to our mill, it works in our favour, though it is a bitter thing to have to say!"

Andrei's speeches had a special quality: one could not interrupt. He forced people to listen. And so it was now. He could see from their faces that his comrades were on their guard, frowning grimly, eager to object but—they were silent.

"I will go to the Volga provinces myself and lead a peasant uprising. I feel I have the strength in me, I can do it. The government must be forced to recognise the people's right to a life without poverty. If it won't budge, we must tear it down, sweep it away! I know you will ask me the question, what about the main target? Are we to abandon that? And I answer you: no, on no account. But I beg of you a postponement. For it is now, in October 1880, that the moment of history has come."

The first to speak, and very firmly, was Figner.

"I am against postponement!"

They all supported her one after the other: Isayev, Barannikov, Kibalchich, Tikhomirov, Oshanina, Korba, Grachevsky, even the Janitor. They spoke briefly and one could feel their embarrassment: "I am against.... I'm against it too.... So am I...." Andrei looked at his stern comrades, loyal to him to their last breath, and thought, "Yes, it's hard to renounce something one has sacrificed one's life to!" He had imagined it would be like this. But they must understand him correctly. This was not exhaustion, desperation in the face of failure, but a very sober assessment, a cool calculation.

When Verochka grew excited, she came out in red spots and her eyes dilated so that you could not tell whether she was angry or astonished.

"How can we stop something now that has taken so much energy and toil, that our comrades died for? The importance of our work lies in the continuity of vengeance!"

"Taras, are you sure that we won't be grabbed tomorrow, today?" Isayev asked. It means risking something that is our bounden duty—the execution of the tsar."

"Others will come to take our place," Andrei said.

"They are not coming in any numbers. We are losing more than we find. No, if we don't do it, no one will!"

The Janitor said, "I understand Taras, of course. We must expand our activities among the people. That's quite true, of course, and in that s-s-sense I a-a-agree...." He was stammering more than usual and, in general, sounded embarrassed. "But c-c-considering things as a whole, I, too, am against postponement...."

Sonya, who spoke in support of Andrei, proposed that the question should be put to the vote, but Andrei said there was no need. He submitted to the general opinion. That evening he and Sonya discussed the whole affair. He had a feeling of hurt and rather unexpected disappointment. It was unexpected because they had rejected the idea so unanimously. He could understand their rejection, but to have no one support you at all!

"You know, Sonya, I've just had a heretical thought," Andrei said suddenly. "In our Committee I'm the only one who's the son of a peasant."

"Why the only one?"

"So even you had never thought of it! It's a fact, isn't it? The Janitor is from the nobility, you are from the nobility, Semyon is from the nobility, Maria Nikolayevna the same, Mikhailo's the son of a sergeant-major, Tigrych's father is an army doctor; the Purring Cat, Figner, Korba, Sukhanov, they're all from the nobility; Baska, Kibalchich are children of the clergy.... Well, who else is there? Martin Langans comes from the German colonists, Bogdanovich from the nobility.... I'm the only peasant's son. There's no one else."

"If you imagine..." Sonya began in a suddenly haughty tone that she sometimes came out with, making Andrei laugh, "that we think any less about the people's good, you are mistaken. That's quite unforgivable in you."

And her glance became almost arrogant, "gubernatorial". He folded her in his arms and laughed, feeling better already.

Of course, he had been joking. But what they had renounced would come by itself, without asking anybody.

He had a knack of cutting off his failures. He could banish even the memory of them. (Admittedly, having disappeared, it would suddenly be revived by some mere accident.) When he returned from the south, the Janitor had brought not only a considerable sum of money, about twelve thousand rubles, gathered from various donors, but also some extremely valuable information for identity papers. These passports made out in the name of the peasants Kobozev, man and wife, were intended for a new scheme in Malaya Sadovaya Street. (On one of his walks Barannikov, who liked walking, dressed up as a dandy, in a top hat and carrying a walking stick, had discovered some suitable premises in Malaya Sadovaya that could be rented. They had decided to start up an establishment like the one in Odessa, in Italyanskaya Street.) So part of the money the Janitor had brought with him would be used for this scheme, while the other was spent on the printing press.

According to rumour, the trial was to begin at the end of the month. Much would depend on it. What kind of stand would Loris take? And the tsar himself? Had there really been a swing in home policy? Or was it all just talk? Though no one realised it at the time, it was probably the outcome of the trial that determined the tsar's fate. The tsar and his generals imagined that the underground party, thanks to Grishka Goldenberg's efforts, had been stripped naked; some had been captured, others would be captured tomorrow and the long lull in their activities confirmed this optimistic view. But the people of the Committee, recalling the sentence they had passed on the tsar in the August of the previous year, only vaguely sensed—and said nothing of this to anybody—that the outcome of the trial held some fatal implication for the monarch. If he showed magnanimity and restrained the thirst for blood, then perhaps this would be taken as a sign.... But if he took the path of vengeance, then his execution must surely follow!

On October 25th, the trial began. It was announced as the case of the nobleman Alexander Kvyatkovsky, the peasant Stepan Shirayev and others, committed to court martial by the officer temporarily commanding the troops of the Guard and the Petersburg Military District on charges of crimes against

the State. In all, sixteen people were on trial: Kvyatkovsky, Shirayev, Presnyakov, Okladsky, Tikhonov, the printers Bukh, Tsukerman, Ivanova, and Gryaznova, those connected with the killing of Kropotkin—Kobylyansky, Bulich, Zubkovsky, the traitor Drigo (he had betrayed Lizogub), Martynovsky and Vera Figner's sister Yevgenia, and Zundelevich.

The next day it became known that Stepan had made a splendid dignified speech about terrorism being of secondary importance to the party, whose main objective was acknowledgement of the leading role of the people, the calling of a Constituent Assembly. The others had done quite well too. This was the first—verbal—clash between the members of the People's Will and the government and it looked as if the People's Will were coming off best. There had been some wavering by people far removed from the party: Bulich, Zubkovsky, and that nervous woman Gryaznova. Why the traitor Drigo had been grouped with the revolutionaries was a mystery. But Kvyatkovsky, Stepan Presnyakov and even the young workers Okladsky and Tikhonov had conducted themselves like heroes! And, of course, Sonya Ivanova—"Vanka"—had displayed splendid courage. Still, no one had ever expected anything else from her.

And yet these were days of real grief. Their comrades were about to die and there was nothing that could save them.

On October 30th, the day before the sentence was to be announced, Andrei went, as had been arranged, to the Janitor's flat in Fredericks's house in Orlovsky Lane. They had several urgent matters to settle. The Janitor showed him letters that had just been smuggled out of the fortress—one was from Ivanova, the other from Presnyakov. Ivanova's contained some information on the court proceedings and Stepan's speech for the defence, while her remarks about herself were brief, "...As regards myself and the others I will tell you later if there is any possibility. At the moment my mind is just a blank, I cannot think of anything. One has to go through some bad moments, my dears. I cannot write any more. *Your Vanka.*"

"They have been let alone until the sentence is passed," the Janitor said. "It will be announced tomorrow, at nine in the evening. Here is Presnyakov's letter."

The letter had been scribbled hastily in pencil. Presnyakov had more charges against him than the others. The killing of

two spies and yet another killing, while resisting arrest, of the porter Stepanov. What hope could he have of survival? But Presnyakov seemed to be hoping for something. He asked for money to be sent and help in apprenticing his brother. He also requested that there should be a stern answer in the event of his execution, "but without any shedding of innocent blood". And the conclusion went like this, "I don't know how I will go to the scaffold, I have no particular desire to live, and yet, on the other hand, I don't want to die. I shall not ask for pardon. So now I say good-bye to all comrades of both sexes—I send you my love for the last time. Live on and enjoy life, fill the earth with your followers and make it your own. Andrei."

And there was another little note, about the traitor Yashka Smirnov, who had betrayed him. "Death to spies in general, and those among the workers in particular.... Good-bye, friends, till we meet in the next life."

Andrei laughed wryly, "In the next life...." How little they knew about each other!

Kletochnikov would be waiting for them in a tavern in Ligovka Street.

It was his usual day for making contacts but not, for some reason, the usual place. The Janitor explained that Natalya Nikolayevna was ill and her flat was not available. The tavern would do just as well, it was quite safe; and he also had a bone to pick with Andrei, over what he had heard from Valentin Kokovsky. So Valentin had been telling tales! Andrei made no excuses. Yes, he was guilty. Ten days ago, before the trial began, Andrei and Kokovsky had by chance attended a student rally. They could not have been in a worse mood. Talk of the trial was already in the air and everything pointed to the scaffold. Andrei's thoughts were far away from the noisy crowd of young people. He spoke uninspiringly, badly. But Valentin was as good as two, Andrei had got to know this young man very well of late. Valentin had become his helper in all matters connected with the workers and in the publication of the *Worker's Newspaper*. All of a sudden, when the arguments were at their height, the door opened and the moustached face of the local janitor had appeared. Valentin instantly switched his tone and continued speaking in a loud voice about a satirical article in *The Voice*. "Now then, gentlemen, what's this here meeting?" The host explained that it was his nameday and he was having a party. The face mumbled,

"Just as you like, gentlemen, but I shall have to report this to the station. Such things aren't allowed nowadays...." And he left. What were they to do? The only illegal member of the company was Andrei. He ought to disappear at once because the man would soon be back with the district police officer. But this course of action—running away like a rabbit—was just what Andrei did not want to take. He realised that every second was vital and yet could not force himself to leave. On the contrary, he suddenly had a desire that had not been there a minute ago to talk and joke. He brightened up and began to tell a story about his life in Odessa. By the faces of those present he could see that they were suffering agonies of impatience and anxiety on his behalf. They were all irritated with him but he could not stop himself. Finally, Valentin grabbed his coat, threw it over his shoulders and shouted as he pushed him to the door, "Go, for goodness sake! Are you doing this to spite us?" Andrei got away safely and a few minutes later the janitor appeared with the police officer.

"I suppose you'd have done a bunk right away?" Andrei asked.

"Of course," the Janitor said.

"That's what makes you a great revolutionary, and me just an incurable amateur. Anyway there's one thing I'm certain of, I shall behave splendidly on the scaffold!" And Andrei thumped his friend teasingly on the back. The Janitor hated jokes on that subject.

He began to lecture Andrei. Andrei ought to have been thinking of others, the people he might compromise if he were arrested. Yes, that was all quite true, elementary, indisputable, but there were moments when one's mind became clouded, clouded not by madness, but by a kind of frenzied outburst of self-esteem. This perpetual unfreedom, this disgusting never ending obedience to petty circumstances was so unbearable!

"I am not aware of it," the Janitor said dryly.

They were walking in heavy rain.

"Don't you notice the rain either?" Andrei asked.

"No," the Janitor replied.

They soon had to run for shelter in a gateway. The rain was cold and heavy, more like snow than rain. Half an hour later they reached Ligovka Street, and dived into the tavern with its humming, jostling crowd of customers wrapped in a cloud of tobacco smoke. The tavern-keeper was a German, a relative of

Bogdanovich, an obliging, pleasant man. He led them up a wooden staircase to a well-concealed room at the end of the first-floor corridor. Kletochnikov had not yet arrived. The waiter brought up some tea and snacks and a bottle of light German wine—from their host. While they were waiting for the agent Andrei talked about Valentin. He was a fine, devoted lad, eager to be of use and not just in some lyrical sense, but in practice, in action. He took everything very much to heart. His friend Presnyakov had been arrested in his presence and he had seen that it was at a sign from Yashka Smirnov, who had been considered a friend of Presnyakov's. Obviously Yashka had done it to save himself. By doing this he had bought his freedom; otherwise he would have been exiled. Valentin had been shaken to the core. "What kind of people are they? Haven't they any soul?"

This was what they were talking about when Kletochnikov came in. Andrei had not seen him for about four months. Nikolai Vasilyevich had filled out and grown plumper in the face. He looked like a minor official, well satisfied with life.

He hung up his wet greatcoat, carefully straightening the shoulders on two pegs so that it would dry properly, shook the water off his uniform cap, placed it even more carefully on a chair, then began to peel off his gloves.

"If I'm not mistaken, you are mourning Andrei Korneyevich Presnyakov?" Kletochnikov smelled as usual of some sickly sweet perfume. Whenever he looked at this man with his wispy beard, small hands and softly yielding glance under those gold-rimmed lenses, Andrei wondered where it all came from. "Well, I can inform you, gentlemen, if you don't know already, that Presnyakov said in his last statement this morning that he admitted his solidarity with the People's Will and shared its ideals...."

Andrei and the Janitor both raised their heads. How did he know this? One of the officials of the Department had been at the trial and had just told him, about an hour and a half ago. He had been most indignant. Nearly all of them behaved boldly, impudently, without any appeal for clemency. These people were utterly hopeless. As he was in habit of selling information to a newspaper the official had made a few notes, which Nikolai Vasilyevich had copied.

"I knew you would be interested. It's in the usual Departmental style, of course...." Nikolai Vasilyevich took from his

pocket a sheet of paper folded in four and clipped to another sheet. Having carefully unclipped and unfolded the two sheets he began to read. "Kvyatkovsky: Long speech with attempts to justify his villainous conduct. Said it was better to die fighting than commit moral and physical suicide. Stepan Shirayev: We belong to different worlds between which there can be no agreement. As a member of the party I acted in its interests and look for justification only from it and the verdict of posterity. Spoke with a particularly arrogant air of composure. Ivanova: unpleasant appearance, fanatic. My only desire is to share the fate of my comrades even if it is the death penalty. They say she has got a child from Kvyatkovsky. Fine morals in these circles.... Well after that there's some comment on the subject, not very interesting.... Martynovsky, Tsukerman and Bukh had nothing to add in their defence. Tikhonov and Okladsky: defiantly impudent. Tikhonov shouted some unsuitable remarks and was called to order by the chairman of the court. Tikhonov: I know that my comrades and I have only a few hours before death.... Okladsky: I neither ask nor need any mitigation of my fate. Far from it. If the court mitigates its sentence on me I shall take it as an insult.... As for the others, no further mention."

"Well, there's Vanichka Okladsky for you," the Janitor said. We got used to calling him Vanichka, Vanichka, do this, bring that ... but he's a hero."

"Vanichka is a sociable fellow," Andrei said. "He does what the world does. If he sees people are standing to the death and not giving in, he'll do the same, so as not to be left out of it."

Nikolai Vasilyevich passed the paper to the Janitor: the other, with the clip, he replaced in his pocket.

"They say there will be five hangings."

"The same reporter?"

"Yes, he has connections with the second judge, Colonel Babst, may even be related to him."

Nikolai Vasilyevich then named several spies and went on to the main thing. He had at last obtained the well-known "Review of the Social-Revolutionary Movement in Russia" which had been commissioned by the former Third Section and published secretly in a restricted edition. It had taken Nikolai Vasilyevich some time to seek out this product of police research, but here it was. A most noteworthy composition. On the basis of statistics the author, a certain Malshinsky, disposed of

numerous misconceptions, such as the idea that revolutionaries were mostly mere boys, intellectuals, non-Russians and that, in general, the whole seditious business had been imported from abroad. This was all disproved by figures. Most of the criminals were products of the Yaroslavl Province; the Petersburg Province was next, then the Kursk, and so on. The great majority of them were Orthodox Christians; only twelve per cent were Catholics, and the percentage of Jews in the movement roughly equalled the percentage of Jews among the population—four. And much else of great interest. The review would have to be printed, of course, in the fourth issue of the *People's Will,* which was now in preparation. But here there was a snag. What should they do about the author? It was *that* Malshinsky...."

"Yes, it's him, no doubt about it," Nikolai Vasilyevich nodded. "The one I warned you about in spring, Pyotr Ivanovich."

Kletochnikov, clever man that he was, worth his weight in gold, had told them way back in March that an agent was to be sent to Europe. He would publish in Geneva a purportedly revolutionary paper *The Free Word* that was in reality provocatory. They had sent warnings to Lavrov and Dragomanov. Lavrov had taken notice, but Dragomanov had responded with a haughty insistence on his right to act as he thought fit. Andrei had been furious at the time. This was at the end of summer, after Dragomanov's refusal to be the party's agent. All right, you needn't get involved with the terrorists if you prefer not to, but don't get involved with the police, devil take you! Now the question was whether by printing the "Review" in the *People's Will* one ought to say in so many words that Malshinsky was a police spy.

This riddle had to be solved in consultation with Tikhomirov, Kibalchich and Anya Korba. Andrei thought that it would be better not to call him a spy. It would have no effect on Dragomanov, he was far too obstinate and much too keen on having his *own* organ. As for the readers of the *People's Will,* they would reap no benefit from it either because it would undermine the credibility of the "Review". Still, the editors must decide. They were truly grateful for the "Review" in any case. What else? Well, nothing really. A few stories. For several days the Department had been in a state of panic because of a telegram from Saratov saying that according to

information received from agents an attempt on the tsar's life was being planned by workers of the Sevastopol Railway led by a certain Ivan Kacain. Who was this Ivan Kacain? Further information identified him as Vanka Cain. This had really set the cat among the chickens, and all the Vanka Cains had been rounded up from the doss-houses. Where had the rumour come from? Who had spread it? About thirty people had been rounded up. And the whole stupid affair was in the hands of Colonel Gusev. Yesterday a telegram had been sent to Livadia—Nikolai Vasilyevich had seen it himself—to say that information had been received that during the sovereign's return voyage from Livadia certain criminal elements intended to send a small gunboat into the Black Sea that would cruise there disguised as a pleasure ship. The Board of Admiralty had been informed. The telegram had been signed by Baron Velio himself, director of the Department of Police. What a joke, eh?

A joke it might be. The three men sitting in their secret room over the Plevna tavern knew that the joke was of their making—fear, suspense, fantastic plans, the sowing of panic among hundreds of people whose duty it was to panic—and they could laugh as only those who know their own power can laugh.

But today they were downcast. Nothing could raise their spirits.

Nikolai Vasilyevich told the story with his small mouth twisted into a smile, but his eyes under the lenses of his spectacles were dark and sorrowful. Tomorrow at nine the sentence would be announced. Andrei suddenly realised he was in a hurry. He was to meet Sonya at eleven on the Voznesensky Boulevard, as they had agreed. Where was Nikolai Vasilyevich to come the next time? They would have to find him a flat. Dear Natalya Nikolayevna, whom he had become so fond of, had apparently given up at last. The nervous strain of sitting indoors, never receiving anyone or meeting anyone had been too much. But how wonderful it had been to be with her, the tea with her home-made biscuits, the beautiful fresh-smelling rolls....

Nikolai Vasilyevich's voice trembled slightly. What a strange man he was! Secrecy seemed to be part of his nature. After all, it was not Natalya Nikolayevna's biscuits that had attracted him; nor was he mourning the loss of the rolls. He

always hid his true feelings with something trivial like this. He would soon be saying that he had joined the Third Section for the money.

"We'll find a flat, it will all be settled soon," the Janitor said. "Don't upset yourself, Nikolai Vasilyevich."

"Oh, I'm not really upset, Pyotr Ivanovich. It's simply that I got used to it and I liked to have a chat sometimes...."

"We'll find a better flat," Andrei said. "And you'll have your tea and talk. That's all within our power."

"But shall I never ... see Natalya Nikolayevna?"

"Never, Natalya Nikolayevna is ill."

The news came: Kvyatkovsky, Shirayev, Presnyakov, Tikhonov and Okladsky—to be hung. For the rest, various terms of hard labour in the mines, Zundelevich, for life. And as soon as they learned of this terrible and most cruel decision they resolved at once that nothing should divert them, that they should give up all else for the one goal of getting even with the tsar. So he would not make concessions. Well, in case.... And even when two days later the newspapers stated that the tsar had commuted Shirayev's, Tikhonov's and Okladsky's sentences to hard labour for life, they remained convinced that there could be no postponement of his own execution. It remained only for history to choose the day.

On November 4th, between eight and nine in the morning, Kvyatkovsky and Presnyakov were hung before parading troops on the left face of the Ioannovsky Ravelin of the Peter and Paul Fortress. Two and a half years before, Kvyatkovsky driving the race-horse Varvar had saved Presnyakov from hard labour by helping him to escape from the Kolomenskoye Barracks. It had been spring-time then, the middle of April, and life had unfolded before them a vista of adventures, struggle and lucky escapes. Now they were hanging motionless together and the people who passed by early in the morning along Kronverksky Avenue from the direction of Bolshaya Dvoryanskaya Street saw the scaffold towering above the fortress wall to the right of the gates and the two figures dangling in their burial robes.

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Shirayev soon perished in the Alexis Ravelin of the Peter and Paul Fortress, Kobylyansky succumbed as quickly in the Schliesselburg Fortress, Tikhonov died of consumption on the river Kara, Tsukerman committed suicide in the Yakutsk Region. Two years after the explosion in the Winter Palace Stepan Khalturin was executed for an attempt on the life of military prosecutor Strelnikov. Some of them survived it all and lived long lives; for example, there were Ivanova, Yevgenia Figner and Bukh, who died only in Soviet times. As for Okladsky, his fate was as follows: to save his own life he agreed to co-operate with the police in exposing his former comrades, for which the tsar granted him hard labour for life instead of the gallows. At the same time, so as not to rouse suspicion, a similar favour was bestowed on Shirayev and Tikhonov. Okladsky became a traitor and agent provocateur; he betrayed everyone he knew, destroyed everyone he could. He gave the addresses of flats, and even drove with the police in their carriages to point them out. He identified prisoners. He was stationed at a spy-hole in another room and observed the people who were brought in, saying who they were. He enjoyed great renown in revolutionary circles, especially after his heroic statement at the trial, "If the court mitigates its sentence on me I shall take it as an insult!" They planted him on other prisoners, he tapped out messages, asked questions, extracted information. Sometimes he would work under another name, Tikhonov's for example. He identified the body of Grinevitsky. He caused the destruction of Kolodkevich, Fridenson, Kletochnikov, Ivanovskaya and in all probability Trigoni and Zhelyabov, and many, many others. Even after the People's Will movement had been smashed he went to work with a will first in the Caucasus, then again in Petersburg. For thirty-seven years he drew a salary from the Department of Police, which rose steadily until it reached the substantial sum of 150 rubles a month. His last salary was drawn in February 1917. He was exposed in print only in 1918, when the archives were opened. Where he was or whether he was alive, no one knew at the time. Six years later he was suddenly arrested in Leningrad, living under the assumed name of Petrovsky. This was a strange blunder on the part of this monstrous trickster, who had survived three tsars and three revolutions. In the town

of Luga he had owned a five-room house. When it was confiscated by the revolution, he had moved with his family to Saratov, after which he lived in Serdobsk and was employed as a mechanic in a private cinema. In 1922, he returned to Petrograd, and in 1923, joined the Krasnaya Zarya factory as chief of the electrical engineering shop. Electrical work had provided him with a livelihood all along, right from the time when he had worked in Doctor Sitsyanko's workshop half a century ago. And it so happened that when he was filling up the factory's questionnaire he for some reason referred to his membership of the People's Will party and to the repressive measures that had been taken against him by the tsarist government—two years' imprisonment in the Peter and Paul Fortress. On the other hand, it was rumoured among the workers that Petrovsky had been a member of the League of the Russian People. One thing contradicted the other. The Leningrad department of the OGPU sent an inquiry to the political section of the Unified Record Office, which soon reported back that if the person the OGPU was interested in had certain characteristics he must be Okladsky, the famous provocateur of the People's Will. Why was this archtreachery committed? A whole life in betrayal and at the end of it, when there was no one else left to betray, he had betrayed himself! The reason was simple enough. He had imagined that everything was forgotten, that it could not be traced. Former revolutionaries had the right to certain benefits. Why not make use of it? He was interrogated in a building he knew well enough—the building by the Chain Bridge, where the Third Section had previously had its headquarters, and where he had been taken in July 1880. It had afterwards become the Department of Police and Okladsky, as a free man, used to call there for his friendly chats with Gospodin Durnovo. Now it housed the Leningrad Provincial Court. He denied everything vigorously. His name had been Petrovsky since he was a child. At the end of the 1870s, he had worked on the Transcaucasian Railway and at the Siemens and Gulsk factory. He had mentioned the People's Will in the questionnaire "because this gave a guarantee of steady employment". Only when he was shown photographs dating back to 1880 and certain documents did he confess that he was Okladsky. But it would have been impossible to recognise him from a photograph. Vanichka had turned into a heavy, grizzled, untidy old man, who moved

slowly, leaning on a stick, smoked a pipe and in anything but an old-mannish fashion kept a sharp look-out from under his shaggy eyebrows. His glance had become unrecognisable, it was so hard and devoid of all feeling.

This was the glance with which he surveyed the public from the stage of the Hall of Columns in January 1925, when he was tried. Several white heads were to be seen in the front row—the old men and women veterans of the People's Will. They included the lean old lady Yakimova and the grey-bearded Frolenko. Moscow was commemorating the first anniversary of Lenin's death. The newspapers carried information on where one could buy flags of mourning and a circular had been issued on "Practical Measures for Raising the Productivity of Labour". The picture-houses were showing Mary Pickford in "Rosita". A play "1881", by the young dramatist Shapovalenko, about the heroes of the People's Will, was running at the trade-union theatre and after the trial Yakimova and Frolenko were to attend a performance and give their opinion.

Yakimova looked at this old man in his shabby leather jacket, ragged trousers and huge, thick-soled worker's or rather proletarian shoes. Surely this old man could never have been called Vanichka, he could never have been the quick lively little fellow who would run like a hare to the shop for bread or oil; when they had lived at Bovenko's in Aleksandrovsk, Zhelyabov used to say, "Off you go, like a flash!" And off he would go. That Vanichka had disappeared without a trace, like so many others. Like most of them. Nearly all. And this old man staring stubbornly into the hall—where was he from? The Bolshevik Solts, the Chairman of the Court, read out the charge in an angry voice:

"Okladsky, Ivan Fyodorovich, otherwise known as Ivanov, Alexandrov, Petrovsky, 65 years of age, of peasant origin, was born in the village of Oklad, of the Novorzhevsk Uyezd, Pskov Province. Married. Two years' education at a municipal school, electrician by trade, worked up to the day of his arrest at the Krasnaya Zarya factory as a laboratory research mechanic. A former member of the terrorist organisation of the People's Will party, he was arrested on political charges and condemned in 1880 by the Petersburg Military District Court at the Trial of the 16, by which he was judged guilty of an

attempt on the life of Alexander II made at the town of Aleksandrovsk, and sentenced to the penalty of death by hanging, which was commuted to hard labour for life and banishment to the Transcaucasus. In 1891, he was released from further punishment and made first a private citizen and then a hereditary honoured citizen. Today he belongs to no party. He is charged with the following....''

The experts and witnesses disagreed. Some said that Okladsky's fall had occurred on the night after the announcement of the sentence, when the condemned man was visited in his cell by General of the Gendarmes Komarov. The gendarmes of those days were in the habit of visiting prisoners who had no hope left. They squeezed them dry. Komarov hinted at the possibility of pardon and Okladsky immediately betrayed somebody. Then Komarov had Okladsky transferred from the Trubetskoi Bastion to the Yekaterininsky Curtain and he went barefoot, forgetting to put on his socks for joy. Others thought that the understanding with the authorities began earlier, at the first interrogation in July, when Okladsky was interrogated by Plehve. And some suspected that his connection with the police went even further back—God knows how far. After all, there were many kinds of connections. Besides the paid agents, there were unpaid ones, semi-paid ones, semi-agents, there were agents who were not noted in any lists, the high-ups knew nothing about them, and yet their small, scarcely visible efforts provided a trickle that helped to keep the police department's mill turning. Okladsky had been taken in charge by the police when he was still a boy, at the age of thirteen, and if a man is not endowed with the thing that most essentially distinguishes him from animals—the ability to scorn death for the sake of an idea or a feeling....

Fear of death turned him into a devourer of life. He swallowed days, years, decades, gobbled them up, bones and all, sucked out the juice, devoured everything he could take from this intoxicating swill that made his heart beat and his fingers clench. And even now, at the edge of the grave, those vacant inhuman eyes suddenly gleamed in the light of the photo flashes. And the grey-haired old lady who was giving evidence tried not to look in his direction. He was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. For the second time in his life he disappeared, this time for ever.

Chapter Nine

Photographs of the heroes of the trial were needed—for the historical record, and to be sent to sympathisers in other cities. The task was undertaken by the Janitor. Kvyatkovsky and Presnyakov's execution—particularly that of his old and best friend, "Alexander I"—made him ill with sorrow. No one was as painfully aware of this comradely duty as he. There was a parable he was fond of reciting. It went like this. A hero is languishing in Turkish captivity and hopes to be saved by his mother and father, but they are old and weak, so he hopes for salvation from his wife, but she is helpless, and he is saved by his friends. Only friends can save you! But they had saved none of their sixteen friends. The only thing that Mikhailov could do, he did. On the night after the sentence he wrote a letter to the comrades. "Brothers! I write to you concerning the last act of your social activity. I am moved by strong feelings. I want to put my whole heart and soul into this, perhaps my last greeting to you...."

It was a long letter that ended with a grim promise: something to cheer those who were awaiting the end: "Know this, that the government shall not go unpunished for your destruction, and that if you performed some remarkable acts another terrible act is yet to be performed."

And now he had to get the photographs. That was the least he could do. Of course, it was not simple, many police agents knew the faces of state criminals by sight. On November 2nd, he had received a letter from "Vanka". In it there was a request from Stepan that certain photographs of him in a certain place should be rephotographed and passed on to his wife, his brother Kolya and friends in his home town.

On one of the last days of November, Andrei and Anya Korba were working together in the Committee's flat. The Executive Committee had written a letter to Karl Marx, and Anya, who knew French well, was making the translation. It was an important letter and much hope was attached to it. It began: "Citizen!" It spoke of the tremendous respect they felt for Marx, of the fact that *Capital* had become regular reading for all who could be considered intellectuals. Further it stated that Lev Hartmann had been entrusted with the task of organising in Britain and America the supply of information on the development of social life in Russia and Marx was requested to

help him in this assignment. The letter ended as follows, "Having firmly resolved to break the fetters of slavery, we are confident that the time is not far distant when our long-suffering country will assume place in Europe worthy of free people." The Janitor came in and also plunged into the work of helping Anya with the translation—they all knew some French and had some advice to offer. He said that Marx was bound to like the Alchemist, Lev Hartmann, if only because he was called the Alchemist. Had not Marx long ago dubbed the terrorists—jocularly, of course,—the "alchemists of revolution".

The Janitor was unusually excited. Stammering badly, he suddenly began to rail against some of the students. At first Andrei could not understand what it was all about, then he realised that the Janitor meant those who were not very close to the Committee but sincerely sympathised with the movement. They had turned out to be "supercautious", or in other words, cowards. They had been asked to order copies of the photographs of Kvyatkovsky and Presnyakov at any studio and they had refused, saying quite frankly that they were afraid of falling into the hands of the police. But what harm would that have done them? They had no stain on their character, they were living legally, they were just fireside free-thinkers, damn them! It was a mistake to encourage them, these chatterers. These imposters had better be chased away with a dirty big broom. It was such a little thing to ask, and here they were, shitting their pants already.

The Janitor's tirade against these unfortunate students was suspiciously long and Andrei became impatient.

"Well, how did it all end?"

"I went to Taube and Aleksandrovsky's on the Nevsky and ordered them myself."

"You did?!" Andrei cried.

"Yes, I did. What else could I do? Here I am, safe and sound as you see. They really made me lose my temper."

"My dear chap, you're not yourself," Andrei said. "What's come over you?"

Anya turned pale with fright.

"Janitor, you must be mad!"

"No, I'm not m-m-mad," Mikhailov said, "I understood the risk I was t-t-taking. I'm sorry but it was Stepan's only request."

"You grumble at us for every little thing and then make such appaling blunders yourself. When will the photographs be ready?"

Somewhat embarrassed—he usually hauled them over the coals for any slip or carelessness, and now he had to make excuses himself—Mikhailov explained that the photographs ought to have been ready today. He had called, but they were not yet available. Then Andrei got really angry.

"So you went there a second time?"

"Yes."

"To the Nevsky? To Taube and Aleksandrovsky?"

"Yes, of course."

"Janitor, you know that no fashionable photographer could possibly escape the attention of the police. Why the hell...."

The Janitor could only nod and murmur assent. Luckily he had got away with it. There had been one mysterious and rather unpleasant moment. When he had held out the receipt to the owner of the shop—he was sitting at his desk rummaging among the papers in his drawer and behind him stood a woman, apparently his wife, a red-headed, long-nosed German woman—and the owner after rummaging for some time had replied, "It's not ready, come tomorrow," the woman had looked straight at the Janitor and passed her hand round her neck. What did this mean? Either she had guessed that these were photographs of executed criminals or it was a warning made without her husband's knowledge—there's a rope waiting for you too? The Janitor laughed sheepishly as he related the incident.

Andrei said, "That gesture means only one thing. You are not to go there again."

The same thing was said that evening, at a meeting of the Committee. The Janitor agreed. If he mustn't, he mustn't. But the next day, November 28th.... No one could understand how or why it had happened. Just some incomprehensible, tragic act of folly. A few days later, when some of the evidence had been put together and facts discovered from the grief-stricken Nikolai Vasilyevich, the following picture emerged. That day somebody had been expecting to meet the Janitor in the Gostiny Dvor. So on his way down the Nevsky he had passed by that ill-fated establishment of Taube and Aleksandrovsky's and—what had made him go inside? A moment's weakness? A psychological block? Or perhaps, although this was quite

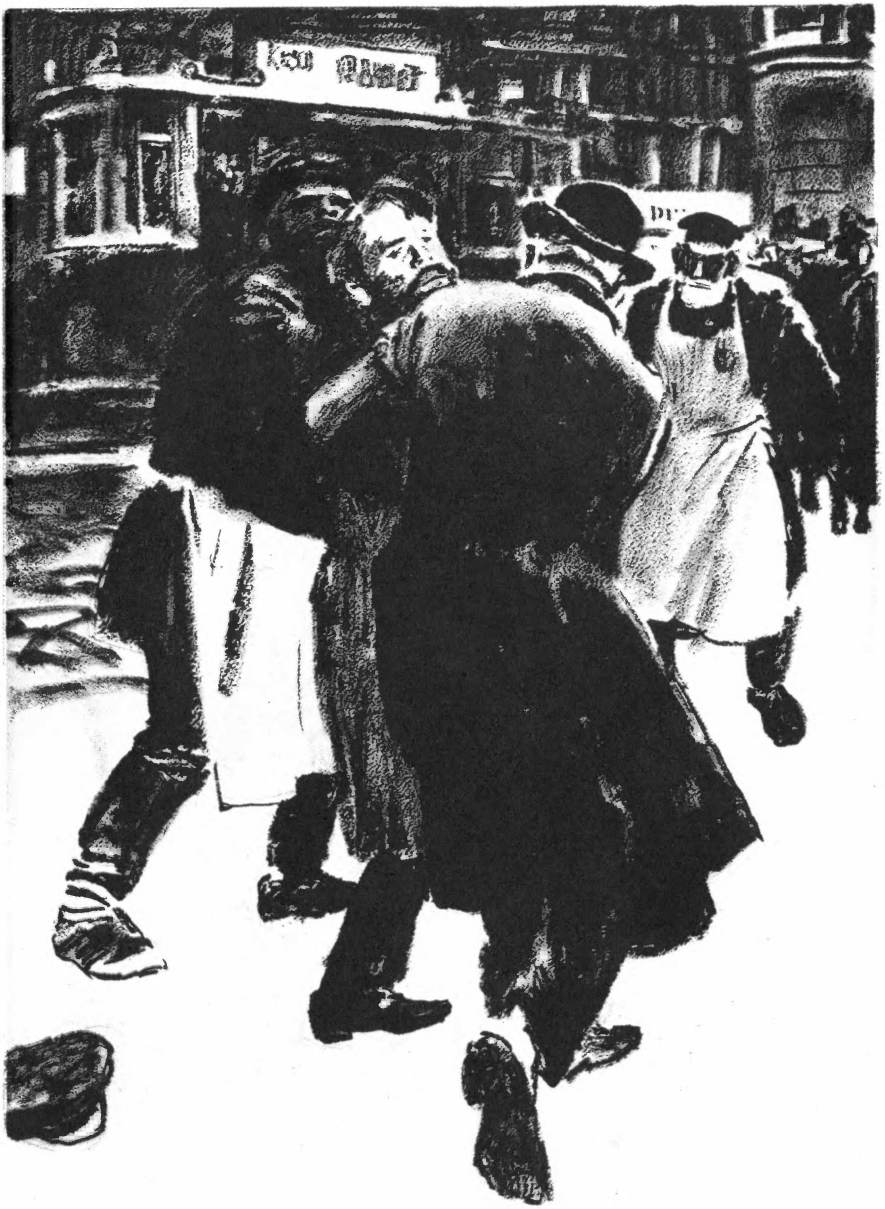
unlike him, an impulse of fatalistic defiance? Or perhaps, and this was most likely, it had been the simple thought, "If I don't go, who will?" He entered the photographers and the German said, "*Ein moment!* Please wait!" and went into the next room. Mikhailov did not wait, he ran downstairs, the doorman tried to bar his way but he pushed him aside and jumped on to a moving tram. A police officer Kononenko, in plain clothes, who had run out of the studio after him, jumped on the tram too. Mikhailov jumped off while the tram was still moving, so did the police officer. He caught up with Mikhailov and pounced on him, the janitors from the surrounding houses ran up and held him fast. Mikhailov protested, "You shall answer for this! I am Lieutenant Konstantin Mikhailovich Polivanov, retired!"

"Where do you live?"

"Number 2, Orlovsky Lane, flat 25. The landlady will identify me!"

Why had he been so eager to reach the flat? Evidently he had been hoping that the journey through town would give him a chance of escape, as had happened before. He had often slipped out of such traps. And besides he had to put a "distress signal" in the window to warn the comrades. He did not manage to give his captors the slip, but he did put up the signal—a book on the window-sill, propped against the pane. The following items were found during the search: proclamations from the Executive Committee, a walking stick with a dagger hidden in it, a brass knuckleduster, many photographs of state criminals, and dynamite in two tins. Very soon Mikhailov's real name became known. Nikolai Vasilyevich thought that *he had been shown to somebody* who knew him well.

This terrible conjecture was the most depressing thing of all—so there must be a traitor in their midst? But what was so strange about that? The party was growing, more and more workers' and students' circles were joining, and now that the fleet was back from its summer cruise a naval organisation was being set up. Plenty of people knew Mikhailov. If there was a Kletochnikov in the Department of Police, then there was just as likely to be a police Kletochnikov in the party. Incidentally, the Janitor himself had often thought about this and said, "They must have someone among us. There's bound to be!"



Okladsky was marched to the spy-hole and saw the Janitor in his dirty, mud-stained lieutenant's uniform. The Janitor, pale-faced but calm, was sitting on a chair, looking out of the window. Beside him stood an officer of the gendarmes. It was the work of a moment. He looked through the spy-hole and told them what he knew. That day, instead of the regulation meal for those condemned to exile and hard labour, Okladsky was given the meal laid down for a prisoner under investigation: *borshch* with meat in it, roast game, and an orange for dessert.

Nikolai Vasilyevich suddenly buried his face in his hands and, shaking his head, whispered, "What shall we do now, without Pyotr Ivanovich? How shall we get along without him?"

When he looked up again there were tears in his eyes. The others said nothing. Then Semyon launched into a furious tirade about what should have been done. They ought to have hired any street boy for a few kopeks and given him the receipt; it was just a useless muddle! Couldn't they see that everyone would end up the same way or very similarly? Andrei sensed that they expected of him the same clear-headed firmness that the Janitor had provided.

He said firmly to Kletochnikov, "Please calm yourself, Nikolai Vasilyevich. We are just as sorry about our friend as you are, but life goes on and we have business to attend to."

"Yes, of course.... I quite understand...." Nikolai Vasilyevich put on his spectacles hurriedly, but his eyes were blind and the tears still rolled down his cheeks. He wiped them unashamedly with his hands.

"Please, be calm. There is your new Pyotr Ivanovich—a very perfect and valorous knight." Andrei pointed to Barannikov. "Call him Semyon or, if you like, Pyotr Ivanovich. You will meet on the same dates and at the following address."

Nikolai Vasilyevich looked at the paper on which an address was written, nodded, then glanced at Barannikov and suddenly gave a loud sob, like a woman, and again removed his spectacles; it was hard to bear. They waited for him to recover. Eventually he picked up his hat and went to the door. Barannikov made as if to show him out, but he suddenly sat down again.

"This is very, very bad..." he mumbled, speaking to no one but himself, and looking past them out of the window. "Very bad indeed.... As you might say.... Can you imagine what it's like when a man is completely alone, as I am? And added to that, working in the police?"

"Haven't you any family at all?" Andrei asked.

"Of course, not. Nobody at all. I'm quite alone. And Pyotr Ivanovich used to ask sometimes,'How are you getting on, Nikolai Vasilyevich?' And I would tell him something...."

"I will be your friend, Nikolai Vasilyevich," Barannikov said.

"Yes, of course, I understand. Thank you..." Nikolai Vasilyevich let his head droop low, and then nodded. Andrei stared at him in astonishment. He had never suspected that Nikolai Vasilyevich could be like this. It was as if he had gone a little mad. "You are all my friends, I know that and I thank you for it, but I am a stranger to you all."

"Nikolai Vasilyevich, you are our closest and most treasured friend. We need you more than anyone else in the world," Andrei said.

Kolodkevich and Barannikov also said something together. Nikolai Vasilyevich made a limp movement with his hat.

"This is all very bad, gentlemen. I am most upset, you must excuse me...." He suddenly rose and left.

The fatal nature of this wound did not show itself immediately. But at once there was a feeling of mortal grief, a numbing sense of loss. How could they manage without the Janitor? Sonya said, "He looked after you. Only recently when we were discussing who should be in charge at Malaya Sadovaya, he said, 'Anybody but Taras!' You weren't there, you had gone to Kronstadt." "What do you mean, 'looked after me'? That's nonsense, my good woman!" He did not like the sound of that, and would not believe it. But Sonya persisted, "Yes, he looked after you. He was keeping you for the Constituent Assembly." Well, that may have been so. One thing was clear, he would never have such a friend again. But the fatal thing, of course, was not their personal suffering, but the damage to the cause. It was all very well to say that Kletochnikov would be taken over by Barannikov and Kolodkevich, both of them splendid fighters; but one was bold to the point of recklessness, and the other was not very clever in prac-

tical matters, so between them the two were not so strong as the one, that utterly cool-headed and calculating man of courage, the Janitor. And to have been caught like that! How stupid, how unlucky! Somehow Nikolai Vasilyevich must acquire the same trust in Semyon and the Purring Cat as he had felt for the Janitor. And another thing. The Janitor was the only person connected with the writer Zotov, Vladimir Rafailovich, who had undertaken to look after their archives. Last year one of "their" legal people had introduced Kolya Morozov to this Zotov and, when he went abroad, Morozov had introduced Zotov to the Janitor. The archives contained all Kletochnikov's reports, the stamps for the passports, various documents and memorandums. How could they get in touch with Zotov? There was only one hope, that Morozov would return. They had been asking for him, not specially for this purpose, but simply because people were needed. Sonya had written to Geneva and the Sparrow might appear in January. And another thing, no one had studied their enemies, the Third Section, the whole police set-up, as thoroughly as the Janitor. He knew all the leading officials and agents by name, and many by sight. He had kept track of their movements in the service, collected information about their lives and any special likings they had. This precious knowledge that had now disappeared was irreplaceable. No one—after Valerian's death—had been as successful as the Janitor at collecting money. And finally, no one could be the *Janitor* as he had been—such a ruthless, alert, all-seeing, and ever-wary Argus.

During the day there was no time for grieving, for anguish. He was on the go all day long and knew nothing but tension, the weight of the revolver in his pocket, the naval people at Kronstadt, the workers all over Petersburg, the students, the printing press, the *Workers' Newspaper*. But in the evening, when he got home at last to Izmailovsky, with his legs scarcely carrying him and there was Sonya also on her last legs—she had to be out in the street all day because she was in charge of the scouting party that was keeping track of the tsar's movements—he would suddenly find himself remembering the Janitor.

Sonya would be telling him about the day's adventures and he would suddenly burst out, "The Janitor would never have done that. He would've gone into an eating-house first, then waited a few minutes and...."

"Remember what he used to say, 'If the Party orders me to wash cups, I'll wash cups'?" (This was before they went to bed, when he was washing the dishes and Sonya was making the bed).

Sometimes he thought of the Janitor at night, in his sleep. It would wake him up. And once, when thus awakened, he roused Sonya because the thought had been so sharp and painful. Putting his arm round her, he said, "I suddenly felt terribly sorry for Sasha. You know why? Because he was not happy, he had never loved, he kept putting it off and putting it off.... He once said to me, 'Fate granted me the happiness of getting things done.' But as for ordinary human happiness.... He said he didn't need it, that one day in some other life, a woman would appear and he would love her very dearly."

"I was the same—until I met you."

They lay in each other's arms, thinking of Sasha and themselves. Of Sasha with a heartbreaking pity, but of themselves, calmly, wisely and with tenderness. Everything was as they had wanted it.

Their favourite topic of conversation was the new people who were joining the party. Their numbers were increasing. This was good. It showed that the party was a magnetic force, that it touched a vital chord in people's hearts. But there was also a danger in this. The wider the circle of membership, the more chance there was of exposure. The Kronstadt sailors led by Sukhanov and Stromberg had at last created a proper organisation, the Central Military Circle, which was subordinate to the Executive Committee. The students had formed a Central University Circle, and while the Military Circle numbered only two or three dozen, the young people attached to the University Circle ran into hundreds. The students included such energetic lads as P. Podbelsky and Kogan-Bernstein, Andrei was keeping an eye on them. A little more time, a few more actual operations and these two would become really close followers. Members of the Committee? Well, it was too soon to speak of that. Vaska Merkulov and Sergei Degayev, who had done things for the party, were already complaining that they had not been admitted to the Committee and, in general, so it seemed to them, were not fully trusted. But what could you do about it? Complete trust was something far too serious, impalpable and mysterious. It did not arise arithmetically, with a majority of votes. Or perhaps it would be truer to

say that this was how it did arise, but this was only the appearance; the actual thing happened somehow differently. It came over you suddenly, like a feeling of happiness. It was sometimes hard to understand. One man would take part in many operations, make a good showing, and yet it would still be better not to bring him into the Committee; while another might not have done much, but to everyone it was clear for some reason that this man was theirs, the one they needed. This was how he suddenly sensed that Timofei Mikhailov, a boiler-maker, was one of them.

In one way he was like Presnyakov, just as big, heavy-handed and silent, with that clear, grim look in his eyes. And like Presnyakov he was known to working-class Petersburg for his reckless audacity. It was nothing for him to stab a spy to death or lie in wait for some hated, bullying foreman and thrash him within an inch of his life. A real Presnyakov, exterminator of spies, was growing up out of Timofei, and the lad was only twenty-one.

Valentin Kokovsky had become a close assistant in all matters concerning the workers. At night they sat together writing the magnum opus of which Andrei was very proud, "Programme of the Worker Members of the People's Will Party". He also helped with the *Workers' Newspaper*, the first number of which appeared in the middle of December. Andrei wrote the leading article. Some said that it was not bad, quite lively, in a popular style; the working-class reader would understand it. Others maintained that there was too much rhetoric. Tigrych frowned, "Writing articles is no job for you, Taras!"

The old scribbler was probably right. He would gladly be rid of this wretched journalism, this casuistic playing with words. His job was to give the ideas. Yes, the "Programme of the Worker Members"—that was something worth doing! It was something to rack your brains over. Tigrych spent two hours reading it, could not tear himself away, then said, "This is quite an essay."

Andrei knew it was the thing that would remain when he was no more.

Actions, gestures, words, phrases—they all died; the only thing that would live for ever, for as long as mankind itself existed was ideas. There were not many of them. They might be mistaken. But they were indestructible; they would arise

again and again, in various guises while still remaining themselves. He woke Sonya at night to make her listen. Sonya had caught a chill outdoors and was running a temperature; her eyes would not stay open and she was too weak to turn her head. In a few minutes he noticed that she was dozing off.

"Are you listening? I am reading a most important document! I have never written anything more serious!"

Sonya opened her eyes and tried to smile.

"I'm just a woman street trader now. A minder of courtyards. The only thing I react to nowadays is the tsar's carriage.... Sorry, dear, I'm ready, I'm listening."

She sat up and with a desperately attentive look on her face prepared to listen. But he realised that it was no good torturing her. Sonya was on her feet from morning to night, out in the street with her scouting party. He would read it to her tomorrow.

"No, now," Sonya protested. "I want to hear it now." But a second later she was asleep. The next morning she had a pressing engagement but he forced her to listen to the whole thing from beginning to end. He enjoyed reading it aloud so much. Later, in December, he read it many times in the workers' study circles. The Programme was divided into six chapters. Chapter "A" began as follows:

"The historical experience of mankind, and also the study and observation of the life of the nations clearly and convincingly prove that the nations will achieve supreme happiness and strength, that people will become brothers, will be free and equal only when they organise their life according to socialist doctrine, i. e., in the following manner:

"1. The land and instruments of labour shall belong to the whole people, and every workman shall have the right to use them.

"2. The work shall be performed not singly but together (in communes, artels, associations).

"3. The products of the common labour shall be shared, as decided, between all workers according to the needs of each.

"4. The system of state shall be based on the Union treaty of all communes.

"5. Every commune shall be entirely independent and free in its internal affairs.

"6. Every member of a commune shall be completely free as regards his beliefs and personal life; his freedom is restricted

only in those cases when it involves coercion of other members of his or another commune.

"If the nations reorganise their life as we, socialist workmen, desire it, they will become truly free and independent because they will no longer be either masters or slaves. Then everyone will be able to work without being in bondage to a landowner, a manufacturer, a master, because no such parasites will exist....

"*Work in a commune, in a co-operative, will provide the opportunity of making wide use of machines and all the inventions and discoveries that facilitate work.* For the workers, the members of a commune, therefore, the production of all that is needed for their livelihood will require far less labour, and they will have at their disposal much free time and energy for the development of their minds and the study of science.... *Personal freedom,* i.e., freedom of opinion, of study, of all activities, will unshackle the human mind and give it full scope.

"The freedom of the commune, i.e., its right together with all the communes and unions, to intervene in state affairs and guide them according to the general wishes of all the communes will prevent state oppression. Will make it impossible for immoral people to lay hands on the country, to plunder it as various kinds of rulers and officials, and suppress the people's freedom as is being done now."

Chapter "B" spoke of the fact that people were ignorant and downtrodden and did not know the principles on which the new life of Russia should be based. In Chapter "C" the people's helper and ally was to be the Social-Revolutionary Party. Chapter "D" noted the essential changes that must be brought about in the system of state and the life of the people:

"1. The rule of the tsar in Russia shall be replaced by the rule of the people, i.e., the government is made up of people's representatives (deputies); the people themselves appoint them and replace them; and in electing them they state in detail what these deputies must seek to achieve and demand that they account for their activities.

"2. The Russian state shall be divided according to the character and conditions of life of the population into regions that are independent in their internal affairs but connected in a single All-Russia Union. The internal affairs of each region shall be managed by the Regional Administration; and those of the whole state by the Union Government.

"3. The peoples that were brought into the Russian tsardom by force shall be free to secede from or to remain in the All-Russia Union.

"4. The communes (hamlets, villages, suburbs, factory artels, and so on) shall decide their affairs at meetings and put them into effect through their elected administrative personnel—elders, constables, scribes, managers, foremen, clerks, etc.

"5. All land shall pass into the hands of the working people and be considered public property....

"6. The mills and factories shall be considered public property and given over for the use of the mill or factory communes, their income belonging to these communes.

"7. The people's representatives shall issue laws and regulations indicating how the factories and mills must be built so as not to be detrimental to the health and life of the workers, and determining the number of working hours for men, women, children, etc.

"8. The right to elect representatives (deputies) both to the Union Government and to the Regional Administration shall belong to every person who has reached his maturity; similarly every person of age can be elected to the Union Government or Regional Administration.

"9. All Russian people shall have the right to uphold or adopt any faith they choose (religious freedom); the right to distribute orally or in printed form any thoughts or doctrines they choose (freedom of speech and the press); the right to assemble for discussion of their affairs (freedom of assembly); the right to form societies (communes, artels, unions, associations) for the pursuance of any aims they choose; the right to offer their advice to the people concerning the election of representatives and concerning any social matter (freedom of election canvassing).

"10. Public education in all elementary and higher schools shall be free and available to all.

"11. The present army and all military forces in general shall be replaced by local people's volunteers....

"12. A State Russian Bank shall be established with branches in various parts of Russia for the establishment and maintenance of factory, mill, agricultural and, in general, all kinds of industrial and learned communes, artels and unions....

"The urban workers must always remember that if they are separate from the peasantry, they will always be suppressed by

the government, the manufacturers and kulaks because the main force of the people is not in them, but in the peasantry. If, on the other hand, they constantly stand by the peasantry, keep them on their side and show that things should be done together, by common efforts, then the whole working people will become an invincible force."

And there were another two short chapters "E", about the way to form workers' study circles and "F", on how to start and develop an uprising.

Andrei read the programme not in all the workers' study circles, but only in the ones they called *highest grade* circles, whose members were literate and had at least a little knowledge of socialism. This hierarchy of workers' circles had taken shape in winter. The lowest circles were those with five or six workers gathering at the flat of one of their number, where instruction was given in reading, writing, arithmetic and geography. In the circles of the second grade lectures were given on history and the socialist doctrines. At these lessons Andrei would talk about Ireland. And finally, there were the circles of the highest grade, little clubs of conspirators, attended by people with some preparation and firmly resolved on the revolutionary path; the members of these circles were workers, and their leaders, students or former students. The leading figures here were Podbelsky, Kogan-Bernstein, or simply Lyovka, Dubrovin, Engelhardt, and among the workers that same Timofei, Gavrilov, Belayev and others. Andrei had read the programme about three times and each time he had sensed the excitement, the deep inward stirring that it caused. People suddenly became aware that they, wretched slum dwellers, were by no means the mere dust of history, but its engines, its springs.

And after all this was the main thing, to make a person believe that he could create history, reshape the world!

The picture of the reorganisation of society outlined in the programme did not arouse any objections, but perplexity and questions did arise in connection with the last chapter, which was about the uprising. This perhaps was the weakest spot; it had not been fully worked out. No wonder they all pounced on it. It was easy to put things down on paper, but try to put them into practice! He had written, "Simultaneously the government must be disorganised, and its most important officials (the more important, the better), both civil and military, must be

destroyed." And people would ask, "And just how, for instance, are we to *disorganise the government?*" If it had been clear and obvious how to do it, it would not have been written, it would have been *done* long ago. "The Army must be won over to the side of the people, then disbanded and replaced with people's volunteers." And again a question, "But how can the Army be won over? By persuasion, or by force, or by winning over some of the officers?" This was not at all clear. Out of the whole enormous mass of the Russian armed services they had so far won over perhaps thirty: Kronstadt lieutenants and some of the gunners. Andrei would agree that there was still much to be thought out here. But what was the main thing in an uprising? To begin! Let's first throw our weight into it, then sort things out. Once they had pushed the boat into the water it would go by itself.

In the study circles there was argument, plenty of noise, discussion of world problems, daring socialist dreams, but at the Committee's flat the talk still turned on the same old thing, tunnelling, dynamite, four pounds here, a yard or two there. Grisha Isayev, a clever man, one of the best read of their members, who used to tell them so much about Irish affairs, had now dropped everything, stopped reading and talked only about making dynamite. Kibalchich was the same. They were all in the grip of this rush for dynamite. The mining of Malaya Sadovaya Street had been decided upon, and now a group led by Frolenko was being sent to Kishinev for another tunnelling operation—the robbing of the Kishinev treasury. When they met at Anya Korba's or Hessia Helfman's flats or at the big printshop where Grachevsky was in charge, the conversation was monotonous.

"What do you think, how many pounds will be needed?"

"What approximately would be the spread of the explosion?"

"Gentlemen, the problem of the possible injury of innocent bystanders that you prefer to ignore...."

Kibalchich told Andrei that the women were more cruel than the men. He had deduced this from what was being asked about the possible loss of life in Malaya Sadovaya Street. But surely this was nonsense! Kolya's usual failure to understand women. What he regarded as cruelty was really something purely feminine—their passion, their ability to give themselves up completely to something, to an idea, to comradeship, even

to dynamite. And to think that these women, Verochka, Sonya, only a year and a half ago had been unshakable advocates of propaganda! How everything had changed! What tremendous arguments there had been about lofty matters with the Janitor, Kvyatkovsky, Kolya Morozov, Maria Nikolayevna and the sarcastic Tigrych. Some were no longer among the living, and others far away. Maria Nikolayevna, once a devoted philosopher, had turned to practical affairs. Tigrych had withdrawn to the domestic life and even intended getting married with a proper wedding and all.

When he had read the "Programme of the Worker Members" once again and studied it carefully, Tigrych said, "In my opinion this is feasible and by no means foolish. But ... what are we doing at the moment? We mant to blow up the tsar. We want to blast our way into the treasury. But there's not a word about this here, I mean about terrorism."

He was right. It was not because of the need for secrecy. The party had already declared its intentions by its many terrorist acts, so there was no secret about it and enough ballyhoo had been raised at the trial. Tigrych had put his finger on a sore point—inconsistency! Either one must train an armada of workers' circles, a proletarian army on the lines laid down by Marx, and unite it with the peasantry, or else one must blow up monarchs with dynamite. If one chose dynamite, did one need circles? What was the use of all this ant-like and extremely painstaking work?

Their task was to open Pandora's box and let loose the hurricanes and storms that would sweep away everything that was so hateful to them. The blowing up of a monarch was only a device, a key for taking off the lid. They, the Social-Revolutionary Party, would deal with this themselves. The workers and peasants would enter the battle later; they would perform the role of the tempest.

Sonya reported that the scouting party that had been keeping watch on the tsar's movements for nearly six weeks had found out the following. Usually he left the palace at half past one in the afternoon on his way to the Summer Gardens. On Sundays, he drove out for the changing of the guard at the Mikhailovsky Manège. The horses went like the wind—escorted by a convoy of six or eight Cossacks. They rode at the

side of the carriage, covering the door. The cortège went by way of Malaya Sadovaya, but often returned by another route, along the Yekatereninsky Canal.

"The turn at the Yekatereninsky Canal is just the place," Sonya said. "The driver reins in the horses and the carriage moves at almost a walking pace. I've seen it about ten times, I watched specially."

Andrei made a calculation. Finishing the repairs, fitting out the shop, digging, laying of the mine, all that would take about a month and a half, not more than two. Somewhere in the second half of February. But what day? That was not difficult to reckon out. It ought to be Sunday. So it would have to be either the 15th of February or the 22nd. Or perhaps—what would be the next date?—March 1st.

So now everything depended on how quickly they could make the tunnel. The premises had been bought. A Voronezh merchant Yevdokim Yermolayev Kobozev had acquired the basement in Mengden's house, intending to open a cheese shop there. It was in a wretched state and needed repair; the asphalt floor had cracked and let the water in. While the repairs were in progress the merchant lived in a hotel, turned up every day and hurried matters on. At Vera's suggestion they had chosen Yuri Bogdanovich, a friend of hers from the days of the Saratov settlement and a man of splendid integrity, to be the merchant. He certainly looked like one. His face was red, he had a big spade-like beard, a ready tongue, jolly temperament and was full of resource. Although he came from the nobility, a Pskov landowner, he could dance or sing and chop a sack of firewood as well as any peasant. One couldn't have thought of a better man for the part! But the question of who was to be the merchant's wife had given rise to difficulties. Baska had volunteered and been appointed, but Sonya had protested because she wanted the job herself.

Sonya had a way of bringing everything out into the open. At the Committee meeting she said that she would be a better merchant's wife than Baska, even though she was of aristocratic origin and Baska was the daughter of a village priest.

"I am more suited for it," Sonya said. "You must realise I'm thinking of the good of the cause. Baska, you have the wrong kind of manners. And you smoke!"

Baska said that she would give up smoking. This was awkward. Bogdanovich, gallant and tactful fellow that he was,

said that he found it extremely difficult to choose a wife; both ladies were beautiful, charming and most worthy in all ways. And he boomed out an air from "Askold's Grave". They all laughed and decided to put off the final decision to the next day. In the evening, Sonya tried all she could to convince Andrei that he should defend her candidature. Andrei sat in frowning silence for a while, then said, "No! You are not to have any advantages over anyone else."

The Committee confirmed its decision: the wife of the merchant Kobozev, Yelena Fyodorova Kobozeva, was to be Anya Yakimova "Baska". On January 1st, 1881, the merchant and his wife moved into the newly-decorated basement and set up shop. The Malaya Sadovaya was considered a special street. It was one of the streets used by the tsar, so the police took an interest in all the people who lived there and particularly any newcomers. The Kobozevs' passport was not simply registered at the police station; it was sent to be checked at the place of issue, in Voronezh. From there, however, a positive answer was received. Yevdokim Yermolayev Kobozev, a lower middle class citizen from the town of Voronezh, had indeed received this document in such and such a year. And so everything was settled and they could begin. They began on the very first night. They curtained the window in the room and left a dim light on in the shop, where a lamp was burning before the icon of St. George. The wooden screen concealing a brick wall that had to be broken through was removed, crow-bars were taken up and the first blows were struck by the two strong men—Andrei and Semyon....

The night before they had celebrated at Hessia Helfman's flat. Andrei could not remember a merrier or more uproarious party. He had never known anything so noisy in his life. They had danced the *trepak* and sang the Ukrainian "Look and Wonder" and "Blows the Rousing Bugle" and the neighbours from downstairs came up and started knocking on the door and they had to get out their revolvers and be at the ready and then at the sight of the neighbours' frightened faces joyfully apologised and promised to be quieter.

"Forgive us, students, gentlemen, the lectures were too much for us. After all, the New Year is surely the time to have some fun?"

Andrei danced till he was exhausted, laughed till he dropped and sang till he was hoarse—he quite literally lost his voice from gulping the frosty air when he, Semyon and Kolya Sablin ran out into the yard in their shirt-sleeves to wrestle in the snow. Sonya restored him to audibility with hot tea. But behind all this noise Andrei sensed a vast silence. Perhaps it was the silence of death. He looked at his friends' faces, suddenly realising that he was seeing them together for the last time. How dear and unforgettable they were! If only he could remember them all, take them with him, keep them all in his heart. Hessia, small and dark, like any of the girls he had once taught Russian in Odessa, darted to and fro between the kitchen and the room, fetching and carrying, pouring out, asking what they wanted, taking care of them all. This great kindness and great strength of little women! Bearded, pale—heavy drinking was not for him—Kolya Kolodkevich helped Hessia. Bogdanovich with his huge red shovel of a beard and his booming voice had been talking "merchant fashion" all the evening and kept them in fits. And Baska had answered him back in her tripping Vyatka dialect. There had been Kolya Sablin with his puns, and Verochka, of course, had been brilliant—in beauty, voice and dress. Dear, sweet Verochka, you must always be lovelier than all the others.... And when in a moment of silence they raised a toast to their friends, to those who were in enemy hands, to dear Janitor and to Stepan—he was in the Alexis Ravelin, a message had got through—and again there were groans for the Janitor's ill-fated blunder, his one incomprehensible act of incautiousness that had stunned everybody. Verochka suddenly recited some verses. They all knew them or had read them at some time: they were dedicated to Chernyshevsky, but that was a long time ago and now they sounded as if they were about the Janitor. Perhaps about all of them.

Say not he caution thoughtlessly neglected
And for this fault he paid the price.
As well as us he knew what was expected,
Good is not served without self-sacrifice.

His love was higher, farther reaching,
Free his soul of pettiness or lies,

Live for thyself is this world's teaching,
For others surely the good man dies.

So did he reason and death withheld its pain,
He would not plead to stay a little longer,
Nor say his end was all in vain—
Knowing fate, he was the stronger.

They've not crucified him yet, but come tomorrow,
They'll set a time and take him to the wall;
Sent was he by the god of wrath and sorrow
That we, slaves of the Earth, should Christ recall.

Someone quietly amended the last line to, "tsars of the Earth". No, you could not do good without sacrificing yourself, it was impossible. And that was the whole point. Some of them sat with bowed heads, some with clenched fists; Hessia had tears in her eyes. "Come now, dear!" "I'm so sorry for Sasha...." And later, when the wine was flowing again and Kibalchich sat down at the piano, and the dancers began to stamp and Bogdanóvich, still keeping up his part, pushed everyone aside and began to do a Russian dance in waltz time with a terribly funny, impassive "Kobozev" face, Andrei reflected that happiness lay in not knowing the secret, the greatest secret of all—when and how this life would end. He remembered the predictions of Cazotte. At some grand ball on the eve of the French revolution Cazotte had suddenly interrupted the revels and told the guests what their fate would be: "In a year's time you will be hanged.... You will be thrown out of the window.... You will be guillotined."

They had another party a few days later after the New Year. For some reason—God knows why, the strange fellow!—Tikhomirov had married in church and then invited about six people to supper at Palkin's. Andrei had not been to a restaurant for perhaps a year. None of them had. They were always in the cheap taverns and eating-houses. Sonya stayed at home. She was not feeling well and perhaps not very keen either—there was still some friction between her and Tigrych, of which, incidentally, no one was aware but themselves. The guests included Verochka, Ivanchin-Pisarev, a handsome young literary man who wrote for the *People's Will* and kept the editors in touch with Mikhailovsky. And Mikhailovsky

himself was there. Tigrych had asked him to be best man at his wedding. They came after the ceremony in church, the regimental church on the Tsaritsyn Meadow, and Andrei came straight to Palkin's, having just made his excuses over some engagements he had in Kronstadt. He had met Mikhailovsky before but only in passing, under an assumed name, of course, and although the famous writer greeted him like an old acquaintance, Andrei was not sure that he had any clear idea of who he really was. Mikhailovsky behaved in a very simple and friendly manner. He began by informing them laughing that Tikhomirov had for the first time in his life made him wear a frock-coat, which he had hired specially for the occasion, then he suddenly bent towards Andrei and, rounding his eyes, said in an anxious whisper, "You really must shave off that dreadful beard!"

"But why?"

"It's the only beard in Petersburg. I remembered you by your beard. It's like a cliff overgrown with virgin forest! A nocturnal 'Garden of Gethsemane', where your destruction lurks!"

"Oh, no, I won't part with my beard till I loose my head," Andrei said.

"Well, it's up to you, sir, it's up to you...." Mikhailovsky said drily and suddenly stopped smiling. He turned away to the others, who were discussing some new rumours that Loris was galvanising the project of representative government.

"It will all end in nothing but talk, as it did before."

"They're good at making promises!"

"Abolishing the excise on salt—that's about as far as Loris will ever go."

"Not such a bad measure that, by-the-by. Not that the newspapers need have made such an indecent fuss about it."

"That's no measure at all, gentlemen, it's a mere bagatelle! Nothing will save them, whether it's tax relief or Saburov's hand-outs to the students."

As befitted a Jacobin, Tigrych was the extremist at this table. And yet? Sonya, with her penetrating mind, had once said, "Lev is quietly drifting away from us." It was not that he had changed his views or wrote different articles. He still wrote just as fiercely and ruthlessly as before, he wrote splendidly, but now he had decided to get married and had had a proper wedding. Katya was expecting a baby, and that was the

beginning of his drifting away. It was the kind of thing people did when they intended to live. But *they* intended to die. Andrei listened to the conversation of these intelligent people and began to feel a little bored. He thought of Sonya waiting for him at home. He thought of how little time he had left in this world.

Verochka got up to dance a quadrille with Pisarev, and Semyon invited Katya. Tigrych stared at his wife with horror; she had only about two weeks to go and could scarcely walk.

Mikhailovsky called a waiter and ordered coffee and curaçao. Andrei suddenly felt like having a dig at this "master of minds" for whom he had tremendous respect. He appreciated his talent, his readiness to help people, and regarded his articles, signed with the pen-name of Grognard, as the acme of revolutionary journalism. He sat down beside him and reminded him of the predictions of Cazotte.

"Do you remember Laharpe? Cazotte said to him, 'You will be guillotined and your body will be torn to pieces by the mob....' So what have you to say about our pleasant company?" Andrei made a sweeping gesture at the cosy Palkin dining-room, where the three couples were dancing the quadrille and a beetle-like pianist was jigging and nodding his head at the piano. "Make a prophecy!"

Mikhailovsky stroked his beard, coughed and with a sudden seriousness and sense of responsibility, although Andrei had made the suggestion in a half-joking tone, cast a searching glance round the room. When his eyes came back to Andrei, the glance through his spectacles was stern.

"I cannot speak of each of you individually, but all your company is destined for fame. That I do predict. And something else, one day this present age will seem wondrous strange! The most dangerous terrorists were strolling calmly about the city, sitting at Palkin's, dancing quadrilles and drinking curaçao."

Andrei said nothing for a moment, then replied, "I don't know about the fame, but there'll certainly be an uproar."

The bill came to fifty rubles. Verochka's face lengthened. None of them had that kind of money and anyway it was a terrible waste. But the one thing they could not allow was that the "master of minds" should pay. Mikhailovsky had already taken out his wallet, but Tigrych jumped up, "No, no! I'm

paying!" We may be poor, but we still have our pride, thank God.

They were completely out of funds. There had been a hope that the Kishinev tunnelling operation would put matters right, but Frolenko's group had come back empty-handed. Huge resources and toil had been spent on nothing. Somehow they had alerted the police and there had been nothing for it but to leave the hotel from which they had started digging.

Vaska Merkulov, one of the main Kishinev "treasure-hunters", was blaming Mikhailo Frolenko, Tanya Lebedeva blamed Vaska, Friedenson said that they had been short of people for the continuous work, in shifts, that tunnelling required. They were so hard up that Andrei had to ask for money from the impoverished Rysakov, a lad whom Andrei knew very little and was only just beginning to introduce to the cause. Rysakov was moving over to an illegal position and Andrei had promised to pay him from party funds the same salary that he received from Gromov and Co., the office where his father worked. Thirty rubles a month. But meanwhile Andrei urged the young man to demand an advance of three months' salary from his office and contribute at least fifty rubles of that sum to the party funds.

Yes, this was all perfectly correct and reasonable. Why should the money not be taken if it was available? Rysakov was going to become illegal and would lose his livelihood. But the trouble was that the party which this boy was supposed to regard as the most powerful party in the world was borrowing fifty rubles from him! All this had to be endured with clenched teeth, taking no notice of the wondering glances one sometimes received. "You see, we don't need the money so much as some form of symbolic commitment."

Yes, it was a struggle, a life and death struggle; on the one hand the state with its millions, and on the other—a few people for whom fifty rubles was an important sum.

Rysakov and some of the other young members sensed the lack of resources and became cautious. Vaska Merkulov took a rather impudent line. Vaska was one of Andrei's oldest acquaintances, from Odessa times. A soldier's son who had been without care since childhood and had never learned a proper trade—he was a bit of a joiner, a bit of a woodcarver, a happy-go-lucky Odessa carter and jackanapes—Vaska had become involved in revolutionary affairs almost by chance, but

he stuck to them as firmly as Vanichka Okladsky. This jack of all trades was known to everyone as "Vaska". Admittedly, unlike Vanichka, who had a splendid disposition, Vaska was quarrelsome, capricious, inclined to be sulky and for ever asking for something and taking offence over nothing.

Almost as soon as he arrived from Kishinev there was a complaint on his lips.

"Why doesn't Verochka want to have anything to do with me? She won't ever come to a coffee-house or theatre!"

"I don't know, Vasily. Probably she hasn't the time. You had better ask her."

"Just you try! She snorted and went off with her nose in the air. And why doesn't she ever invite me home? I know she's living with Grishka Isayev now, in a new flat. You have your meetings and talks there, you have tea together, but you don't give much of a welcome to a working man."

"We can't, if the working man isn't a member of the Committee."

"But why not, when he's got his heart and soul in the cause, working for it, staking his life every day, every hour...."

"Vasya, old chap, you must understand this is the Committee's flat. Only members of the Committee are allowed in. Vera may have wanted to invite you but she hasn't got the right."

He brushed the argument aside scornfully.

"You give us this talk about the workers all the time, but you're not very keen when it comes to the point."

Everyone who had arrived from Kishinev was now put to work on the Malaya Sadovaya job, digging. Vaska was made the shop assistant in the cheese shop. But Bogdanovich and Baska soon turned him down. He was too small to be a shop assistant and he wasn't willing enough, too full of likes and dislikes. He would suddenly start talking to the customers in a haughty fashion, "Stop driving me! I'm not in harness, you know!"

They worked on the tunnel only at night, and only those who were strong and healthy: Kolodkevich, Barannikov, Isayev, Sablin, Langans, Frolenko, Friedenson, Lieutenant Sukhanov, recently admitted to the Executive Committee, Degayev and Vaska Merkulov. And, of course, Andrei. The earth from the tunnel was piled in a back room and covered during the day with hay and coal. For the first few days the work went

well, they ran into a water main and had to change the direction of the tunnel to avoid it, but this was not difficult. After a few days, however, another obstacle cropped up, a huge wooden drain, nearly three feet square. They could not go under it because of the subsoil waters, and going over it was too dangerous; the road surface was quite close and they might cause a collapse. Sukhanov and Isayev, the two main experts on such matters—no one had chosen them, but it so happened that Isayev was a great enthusiast for digging and Sukhanov knew a good deal about mining—discovered that the wooden pipe was about half empty. They decided to drill a hole large enough to pass the dynamite containers through. As soon as they pierced the casing, however, the tunnel was filled with a terrible stench. No one could stand it for more than three minutes, even Isayev, though they covered their noses and mouths with respirators made of cotton wool soaked in permanganate. But when the drill had been inserted and sealed off, the stench disappeared. Further progress was less troublesome but slower. The drilling demanded considerable physical effort. They were afraid of making too much noise. There was a police post not far away and Baska, who was keeping watch at the window, signalled them when the constable on the beat walked away to the end of the street and when he came near.

And so it went on slowly but surely despite the obstacles and Andrei felt with every fibre of his being, even with his earth-stained skin, that the target was near. In this hellish darkness underground he suddenly knew a moment of peace. Soon the end would come! Soon, very soon. Another week or two, another day or two, and then the end.

The Committee's flat that Vaska Merkulov had heard about and that Vera and Grisha Isayev had rented for the meetings was on the Voznesensky Avenue. Three large, uncomfortable rooms, not much furniture, bad stoves that never kept the place warm. It was specially cold one evening during Epiphany when a frosty-browed Isayev arrived and with a strange smile showed everyone sitting at the table a rolled sheet of paper.

"What do you think, gentlemen, who is the letter from?"

They had just had a depressing discussion about the possibilities of starting an insurrection. No one wanted to talk about

anything else and Isayev's vague gambit received no response.

Andrei asked grimly, "Well?"

"From Nechayev," Isayev said calmly, and placed the sheet of paper on the table. "From the ravelin."

From Nechayev? What nonsense was this! Was he still alive? That Nechayev? Sergei Gennadiyevich? The one who had roused such a storm? The one Herzen, Bakunin, Ogarev, Marx had known? The one they had anathematised? The monster, the tsar's Enemy No. 1. He had got twenty years' hard labour and disappeared without a trace eight years ago into the dungeons.... And now this news; Nechayev was in the Alexis Ravelin. He was alive, undefeated, still fighting, full of grandiose plans, and he sent his greetings to the Executive Committee. Up to November there had only been one other prisoner in the ravelin besides Nechayev, a mysterious individual who had gone mad, but in November there had been newcomers to the ravelin—Leon Mirsky and, later, Stepan Shirayev, with whom Nechayev had managed to get into contact. Stepan had sent Nechayev's letter through a soldier ot the guard who was loyal to him. It was addressed to the Executive Committee, care of Dubrovin, a former school-friend. This was the Yevgeny Dubrovin that Andrei had known well in the workers' study circles. Dubrovin was a medical student and had passed on Nechayev's letter to Isayev, who had studied with him at the surgical academy. Such was the path that this letter had travelled before reaching the Executive Committee's table.

The letter was striking in its directness and business-like tone. Nechayev asked, or rather he neither asked nor demanded, but proposed to the Committee that measures should be taken to set him free. There was nothing superfluous, no effusions or sentiment, no resounding phrases or words of repentance or self-justification, no allusions to the past—he may never have suspected what hatred his name had aroused among the younger generation. After all, it was ten years since the first trial at which not he himself but his supporters had been in the dock. But this was when Nechayev's name had first created a sensation. Clearly and simply, in the same style as the famous proclamations of the People's Vengeance, Nechayev proposed various courses of action. The soldiers of the guard were under his influence. By many years of *work* among them—and what work it had been, what stubborn, tireless talking it had taken!—he had managed to win them over.

Everything about the fortress had been discovered in detail. The number of troops, the weapons, the strength of the garrison and its commanders, and its general lay-out. The only thing Nechayev needed was help from outside. Would the Executive Committee agree to help him?

Andrei recalled Odessa, the summer after his second year at university, the sense of strength, of success, of being awarded the *full grant,* July, swimming, and then running every morning to the municipal library for the *Government Messenger,* which carried reports of the trial. It was all mingled together that summer: the nights, the girls, the fights on the embankment, and in the morning, that strange figure, both alluring and frightening, of the parish teacher of divinity in St. Petersburg, the middle-class citizen from Ivanovo, Sergei Nechayev. He had created the "organisation". He had deceived and lied, pretended to be somebody quite different from what he really was, never told anybody the truth, confused and pestered the émigrés, even poor Herzen before he died, extorted money from them, concocted stories and letters about his allegedly being taken to the Peter and Paul Fortress, circulated rumours that he had escaped by jumping out of a lavatory window, turned up suddenly abroad, committed murder, got people into his power by making them incriminate themselves—and all for the sake of smashing this rotten system!

Andrei remembered how someone had stolen from the library the number of the *Government Messenger* containing "The Revolutionary's Catechism", when it was still called the "General Rules of the Organisation" or something like that, and they had read it aloud in either Misha Trigoni's or Zaslavsky's flat. They had not known exactly who the author was. Some said that it was Nechayev himself, others hinted that it might have been one of the émigrés, perhaps Bakunin. At any rate the essay had been found among the papers of Nechayev's supporters. What a battle it had caused, what arguments had raged! "The revolutionary is a doomed man. He has no interests of his own, no private affairs, feelings, ties.... He knows only one science, the science of destruction.... He despises public opinion.... He despises and hates social morality.... All tenderising feelings of kinship, friendship, love, gratitude and even honour itself must be crushed by the one cold passion of the revolutionary cause...."

These relentless lines that had caused so much storm and controversy, had engraved themselves on Andrei's memory. And no wonder! The things that were said: "This is deliberate provocation designed to make society hate the young people!" "Nechayev is a maniac!" "Nechayev is a bold fellow! He says what others fear to put into words! "A scoundrel! A flatterer!" And what about the famous division of society into six categories?

"The whole of this rotten society must be smashed down into several categories...." The style was striking, every word charged with frenzy and passionate hatred. He did not write that society must be classified or divided into several categories, but that it must be smashed to pieces. Even his words sought to hasten the process of smashing up this accursed society. Yes, everything was divided into six categories. The first would consist of those to be condemned to death immediately. A list would be made up detailing the harmfulness of each person. The guiding factor should be not a person's individual villainies or the hatred he aroused—this was even of benefit to the people's rebellion and hence the worst villains must be "cherished"—but rather the amount of good that the killing would bring to the revolutionary cause; the second category was to consist of specially brutal villains who for the sake of the cause should not be killed at once.... The third category would apply to the highly placed scum that one must exploit, tie up, bamboozle and, having mastered their dirty secrets, turn into one's own slaves....

Ten years had passed since he had read the *Government Messenger* but certain expressions, for example, that "having mastered their dirty secrets" that had struck him then, he could still remember word for word. The revolution, this pure, holy cause, and the secrets of people described as scum? Was one to dig in others' dirt, make other people into slaves? Why, it was against dirt and slavery that all this was being done in the first place! The fourth category, if he remembered rightly, was to include the ambitious ones and the liberals who should also be taken in hand by means of blackmail.... The fifth accounted for the revolutionary chatterers, the doctrinaires who were to be roped in and made to work for the cause.... And finally, the sixth category, which in Odessa had aroused the fiercest arguments, was for the women; they were divided into three grades. The first were the senseless and soulless type that should be

used like the third and fourth categories of men; the others were fervent and devoted but still not entirely to be trusted and should therefore be used like men of the fifth category; and finally, there were the women who were totally on their side. They were to be regarded as precious treasures that one could not do without.

All this was not so much like Karl Moor or the Decembrists or Chernyshevsky's noble man of steel, Rakhmetov; rather it resembled a little book published a year or two previously—Machiavelli's *The Monarch.* But the thing that repelled many people was not, of course, the words that reminded one of this concocted little book, but the stories of the grotto, the murder, the tying of the brick round the victim's neck. They had lured him into their trap, then the five had attacked together. Nikolayev had shouted, "Not me, not me!" They had strangled him in the darkness. Ivanov had bitten Nechayev's hands. It was not vengeance for betrayal, but the paying off of petty scores and the principle of binding by bloodshed. There had to be bloodshed to commit people. It was said that one of the Nechayev men, when in prison, had suggested that they should find Nechayev and kill him. They all hated him. Not one of the accused at the trial had a good word to say for him, although some marvelled at his remarkable qualities. He could do without sleep, had a tremendous capacity for work and the determination of the fanatic. Alexandrovskaya, who had been quite devastating in her criticism, had said, "He is convinced that most people, if placed in a situation from which they cannot escape, are capable of bravery and valour."

And this had been his task, his chief aim and passion: to put people in a position from which there was no escape. Two years later they received the news that Nechayev had been arrested in Switzerland and handed over to the Russian government as a criminal. They had heard the details from Verochka, who had been studying at the time in Zurich. Nechayev apparently had been living in Switzerland, either with Ogarev, or with some of Mazzini's agents. He had earned a livelihood by sign-paiting and had been denounced by an agent-provocateur. The Russian students with their vivid memories of the Nechayev affair had not much sympathy for him and made no attempt to rescue him from the Swiss police. The trial was held in Petersburg. Nechayev behaved

with arrogant defiance and was sentenced to twenty years' hard labour in the mines. As he was marched out of the courtroom he shouted, "Long live the Assembly of the Land! Down with despotism!" After that he had disappeared. Then came the movement to go among the people, the disillusionment, the rebels, the troglodytes, the Land and Freedom, Zasulich's shot, the cases and trials that had caused a stir all over the world, and meanwhile Nechayev had been vegetating in unknown seclusion. But, judging from this letter, he had not been vegetating; he had been working tirelessly on his jailers, fighting without hope in the unknown grave to which he had been condemned. It was his nature; for him the very act of living, breathing, retaining his fire was struggle. He had slapped the face of the gendarme chief Potapov who had come to him with a proposal that he should co-operate with the police. The blow made the blood flow from the general's nose and mouth. Nechayev was beaten within an inch of his life and kept in fetters and chained to the wall for two years. And no one outside had known anything about this! He had endured it all and outlived his chief tormentor Mezentsev. And now, not a plea, not a cry for salvation, but the calm and sober words, "If the Executive Committee considers it possible...."

Andrei remembered the story told by his old friend Felix Volkhovsky. Felix had first attracted him because he was a *Nechayev man.* He had been implicated in the trial and afterwards lived in Odessa under police surveillance. He had said, "A thin beardless little fellow, like a boy; grey face, bitten nails and a convulsive twisting of the mouth. That someone who looked such a nonentity should have such gigantic, hypnotic willpower!"

"What is there to think about?" Vera said. "Of course, we must do everything we can to save him!"

Andrei laughed.

"I've just remembered, Verochka, how furiously you execrated him in Lipetsk. And I tried to cool you down."

"I'm still appalled at his actions. You know full well, Taras, that my worst term of abuse is 'Nechayevism'. But I bow before his courage and sufferings!"

Baska, who knew a lot about Nechayev from the tales of her friend Lipa Kutuzova-Kafiero, a Bakunin supporter, at once came to Vera's support. Yes, of course, we must help him but we still mustn't forget that he was condemned by everyone,

even Bakunin, who called him a Jesuit and a bandit. And the way he had extorted money from Ogarev, all that was left of the Bakhmetyev fund? The way he had tried to seduce some of our acquaintances? That was just like a woman, to mix the main thing with the trivial, but it was painful just the same. Sonya, however, was different from them all. "That is of no importance now," she said. "After what we have learned."

"Yes, that's for one thing!" Andrei supported her. "And secondly, two or three years ago we were really far removed from him and had a right to be indignant, but now, friends, our position is much closer to his."

"How?"

"What are you saying?"

"Give us proof! You can't throw charges like that around!"

"Gentlemen, we are almost carrying out the programme of the Catechism. It said that the revolutionary must penetrate everywhere, into all sections of society, into the nobleman's house, the armed forces, literature, the Third Section, and even the Winter Palace itself. I remember that perfectly because that passage struck me at the time and seemed like a fairy-tale. Now we know that it is by no means a fairy-tale. We have done it, we have infiltrated the military, the literary people, our agent is in the Third Section and we had one in the Winter Palace!"

"Taras, can you kill a man?" Vera asked. "Not a traitor, not a spy, not an enemy, but simply because his death will give you a certain power?"

"What does the person who kills need this *certain power* for? Suppose he needs it for the common good? Suppose he can get power and by this means put the world to rights? One Sunday in the very near future we intend to execute the tsar. He is not a spy, not a traitor, not a personal enemy. But we hope by this execution to acquire a *certain power* over history, to turn the wheel of Russia's fortunes. We are killing for the good of Russia! This is where the whole tragic complexity arises. We dream of peace and prosperity, but we are compelled to kill; we want an Assembly of the Land so that we can urge our point of view in words, but we are making bombs in order to persuade with dynamite."

"But surely you are comparing different things, the killing of the unfortunate Ivanov and the killing of the tsar...." Vera was

the only person to protest and her protest was weak. The men were silent.

"Different in scale. But the pattern is the same. We also began with senseless killings—that Gorinovich fellow, that fool Heiking.... And if Nechayev was not in the ravelin now, he would be here with us and his hands would be as black from dynamite as Grisha Isayev's are now."

One of the men said grimly, "Enough theorising! We are short of time as it is. Let's decide what to do to get him out. We need him, we're short of people anyway."

They decided to entrust the military organisation with the task of freeing Nechayev and Shirayev, and to put Andrei and Sukhanov in charge. All was going according to plan. The not very frosty January days rolled by in a damp mist, the tunnel grew longer, more and more earth was piled up in the back room, in large tubs, in heaps on the floor covered with sacking and coke. But at the end of January they were overtaken by one disaster after another. On the 24th, Friedenson was arrested; a day later police lying in wait in his flat picked up Barannikov, on the same day, Kolodkevich was arrested at Semyon's flat, and on the 28th, came the most terrible blow of all—an ambush at Kolodkevich's flat ended in the seizure of Nikolai Vasilyevich Kletochnikov. In four days the party's best people had been eliminated! What did this mean? Who had given the police the magic word for these devastating, unerring attacks? It could not just have been the party people's own carelessness! But carelessness there had been. They had grown used to the Janitor providing for everyone's security and to Kletochnikov warning them of everything beforehand. But now there was no Janitor, and Kletochnikov had lost half his omnipotence because the city authorities, to which he had no access, also had the right of search and arrest now. That was why they had been caught in this foolish manner; one ambush after another, as if they had fallen under some devilish spell! One night Andrei and Sonya lay awake trying to figure out where this baleful wind was blowing from.

Sonya demanded that Andrei should stop roaming recklessly about the city, jostling in the taverns, mixing with so many people, friends and strangers. He promised that he would give it up. He would allow himself only the main things, the digging of the tunnel, the ravelin, the bomb-throwers. But he saw that he could not give it up. Who else would do the

job? The shortage of people was becoming catastrophic. They counted and recounted. Who was left? Isayev and Kibalchich, they were making dynamite; Baska and Bogdanovich in the shop; Hessia, Sonya, Vera, Anya Korba, Maria Nikolayevna, her sister. The women had survived but the men, the fighters, were almost all gone. Teterka, the party's driver, and Lev Zlatopolsky had been arrested recently as well. So that left Frolenko, Sablin, Sukhanov, Langans and the sick Franzholi.... And some not very reliable new recruits: Rysakov, Timokha, Grinevitsky, and Podbelsky and then there was that lanky young fellow Anya had sent them.

But this was not really important now. When they counted up the sympathisers, it came to about five hundred. That ruled out any plans for insurrection. But surely there would be ten people out of this five hundred suitable for one operation?

During that sleepless night he said, "You know, Sonya, nothing can stop us. We couldn't even stop ourselves."

The whole of Vladimirovskaya Street was jammed with people moving slowly in the direction of the Nevsky. It was impossible to cross. Andrei was returning to the Committee's flat from Ligovka Street, where he had met Podbelsky, and he was in a hurry. But he was in a hurry every day now. He had stopped sleeping. Sometimes he would doze off during the day, suddenly, sitting in a chair. Now he could understand Nechayev's amazing ability to do without sleep. Like Andrei, he *could not* sleep. This was his natural, continuous and never relaxing state. Because he had to make the most of what life he had left. The crowd was moving along at a walking pace, massed together and strangely silent. Wreaths of laurel and palm waved above it. What was all this about? A funeral? Yes, of course, he remembered: Dostoyevsky had died. Someone, Sablin probably, had told him the day before yesterday. Dostoyevsky had lived in the same house as Semyon and Maria Nikolayevna. They had seen him several times on the staircase or outside the house, and once had even chatted about something—yes, about birds. Semyon had been throwing some crumbs to the birds on a frosty day. But now it was a week since Semyon had been picked up. Maria Nikolayevna with her wonderful luck had, as usual, managed to get away in time and now, thank God, she had moved away from that flat in Kuznechny Lane because Kolodkevich had been arrested

there very soon afterwards. But how was he to get across the street?

The crowd slowed down and came to a stop. Andrei climbed on to the steps of a stone porch and looked towards the head of the column, where the wreaths had been lifted high around a black and yellow banner. The sound of a choir singing could be heard from there. It was a light, misty and unusually warm day for winter. The procession had stopped by St. Vladimir's Church. People were asking, "Why have we stopped?" Someone explained, "But, of course! They are singing the *Litia*...."

Andrei noticed many pale, downcast and tear-stained faces, but many were quite calm, even complacent, as if they were pleased that they had managed to be present. The column was protected by a chain of students linking hands. Andrei decided to go faster along the pavement and try to get round at the front, particularly as it stopped time and again and the tail was probably much too far away. Now by walking quickly, now by squeezing between the chain of students and the walls of houses he managed to get nearly to the head of the procession and, rising on tip-toe, was able to see the flower-strewn coffin with the bearers round it, and a huge garland of leaves as well. Some bystanders were trying to guess who was being buried. Andrei heard one of them say that it was a general of the civil service, another suggested that it was a teacher, and someone else added, "They are burying a teacher, the one who was given four years' penal servitude for nothing...." And this mention of penal servitude stung Andrei for some reason and he thought with a bitter joy, "Wait a bit and there will be another funeral!" He managed to push his way into the crowd with the intention of crossing to the other side. Here it was composed of respectable folk in expensive furs, lawyers, perhaps, professors, literary men, and there were many women and young people. It was all moving, or rather drifting, in the direction of the Nevsky so solidly and indivisibly that it was not merely difficult but impossible to break through this emotionally highly charged mass of people. Andrei realised that he had made a mistake in leaving the pavement and getting caught up in the procession. He was carried along with the rest. When they surged he surged with them, when they stopped he stopped, hemmed in on all sides, and swayed slightly because everyone else was swaying. Involuntarily he

listened to the conversation and his thoughts that had been taken up with the dungeons in the fortress wall, Nechayev, the arrests of his friends, the famine in the Orenburg Province, veered towards the writer, that great and inimically remote figure—a hater. He had called for humility and at the same time had hated so passionately. "Humble thyself, proud man and, above all, break thy pride!" And suddenly it had struck him so clearly that, after all, their hatred was of one and the same thing—of suffering. And their worship was of the same thing and their faith was in the healing power of the same thing, human suffering. To suffer and to save. So somewhere in the very furthest distance, further than the eye could see, there must be a point of convergence towards which each of them, in his own way, was striving—a point at which suffering would disappear. Only he had wanted to conquer by means of humility, in thousands of years, *but there could never be patience enough for that!* The human race had no such store of patience, and never would have.

The crowd bore him on. It was almost impossible to push towards the left-hand side of the procession and get out on to the pavement. He heard the quiet murmurings, the sighs, the shuffle of feet, the muffled sobs, the frightened voices, the moaning of the women, and the almost continuous singing of choirs from both in front and behind. All this was unity, it was a stream flowing on to the one, generally known goal—to the monastery? To the cemetery? Humble thyself, proud man, and flow on with the rest.

But Andrei had not another minute to spare.

He used his shoulder and forced his way out on to the pavement. In half an hour, at noon, he was in Voznesenskaya Street.

About seventeen people were gathered there. Mikhail Trigoni, summoned urgently from Odessa, had arrived. As soon as he saw his unusually broad-shouldered, burly friend, Andrei thought, "I'll have him in the cheese shop tonight! He's the man for digging!" Again they talked about insurrection and made calculations, and again it worked out that they were under strength. Sukhanov said that at the most they could raise a couple of hundred military, counting the sailors and artillerymen. And from all the workers' and students' circles in all

cities they could raise about five hundred. That was the figure Sonya and he had arrived at. Of course, a successful assassination attempt might produce an immense increase. Trigoni, provincial and enthusiastic, exclaimed, "What are you moaning about, you dunces? Why, five hundred people—that's a whole army! Napoleon started from nothing and we have five hundred!"

"My dear barrister, your business is to dig," Andrei said. "Tonight you get busy with your spade!"

Tigrych waved his hand in a limp gesture.

"Five hundred? Where from? We see only what we want to see...."

And, of course, the Old Man was basically right. When it came to real fighters, they had more like fifty than five hundred. Or perhaps only thirty. And to be more exact still, only these seventeen who were sitting here in this room. They would go through to the end, to the death; the others would help, eagerly, ardently, they might even join in a fight but they had not committed themselves in the question of life and death.

The second subject to be discussed was what to do about rescuing Nechayev. Andrei and Grisha Isayev read Nechayev's latest letters that had been brought out of the prison by guards who were loyal to him. There was much good sense in them but there was also an amount of sheer fantasy. He now thought that the release of himself, Shirayev and a third, mad prisoner was not enough. What he proposed now was nothing more nor less than the capture of the whole royal family on the day when the tsar came to the Peter and Paul Fortress for divine service. The plan was expounded in detail: *his* soldiers would post themselves beforehand at all the entrances and exits of the cathedral, take over the galleries and Nechayev, released in good time, would appear suddenly in colonel's uniform and declare Alexander II deposed, put him in the cells, and proclaim Alexander III emperor. Simultaneously the whole fortress would be taken over. The striking thing was the absolute confidence he had in the devotion of *his* soldiers.

Some laughed, others were astonished, and others wondered whether Nechayev had not gone slightly out of his mind. Tikhomirov said the interesting thing was that if Nechayev had set about carrying out his plan it would nearly have succeeded. His plans had always nearly succeeded! No, he was by no

means mad, it was his usual, clear-cut, Nechayev style. He had also proposed two simple plans for his escape: one through a drainage pipe, the cover of which was in one of the smaller prison yards where he took exercise, and whose other end came out over the river not far above the water level. The second was that the soldiers should disguise him and escort him out through the gates, where the party people would be waiting for him with a carriage.

Sukhanov said that if they were to use the drain they would probably have to postpone the escape till spring, when the ice had gone. But this was not the main difficulty. Everyone knew vaguely what it was and Andrei said, "My friends, we have got to make a choice: either we execute the tsar or we free our friends. Two such enterprises together are out of the question! One will ruin the other."

The committee decided that Zhelyabov should find out as soon as possible all the ways of rescue, remembering that the tsar's execution was a higher priority for the cause, for Russia. It was a bitter decision to make, but what else could they do? After all, the "Catechism" stated that a revolutionary's actions should be guided by the good of the cause and not by any sentimental considerations.

The drain-pipe plan was rejected. The pipe was too narrow and there was a great risk of being suffocated. The idea of disguise was a good one if it had not needed about six weeks' preparation. They could not postpone the blowing up of Malaya Sadovaya Street, which was timed for the 15th or the 22nd at the latest. So nothing could be done before the blast. But afterwards?

They worked the whole night through in the tunnel. Then another night, and a third. During the day the owner of the house came down to ask the Kobozevs if they were pleased with the repairs and whether the asphalt floor was still holding. He was showing the usual zeal of the property owner. Bogdanovich boomed and waved his hands, trying to describe the situation in words while the landlord was merely interested in coming inside to look. He was almost pushing Bogdanovich aside, which made things awkward, especially as there was some freshly dug earth lying in the back room. But then Baska chimed in with her lively Vyatka accent and declared that there was some washing hanging in the best room and it would be all right to call again in a little while and see anything he

wanted. On the fourth night they worked again on the tunnel, which had gone a long way by now. The fifth night was also spent in shifting earth. Andrei came home in the early morning or day-time, washed himself and fell into bed. Sleep would not come. Sometimes he simply lay exhausted, with closed eyes, sometimes he dozed for a few minutes and suddenly asked Sonya something. It seemed to her that he was talking in his sleep. He smelled of earth. He himself was constantly aware of this smell from his own skin, from his hands—the smell of dampness, of the cellar.

Opening his eyes suddenly, he saw that Sonya was sitting on a chair by the bed and looking at him. A strange, imploring expression had appeared in her eyes of late. There was no time to think about it, but it looked like fear. Fear in Sonya? How utterly improbable. Sometimes in this half-waking state he felt pity for her and it roused him. But as soon as he was fully awake, the sensation passed. And now, as he opened his eyes he still felt for a second a sharp sense of compassion. Then he jumped out of bed asking, "What is the time?" It was half past twelve. At one the annual speech-day was due to begin at the University. And he had promised to be there.

Suddenly Sonya's voice reached him, "Please, don't go."

"What do you mean!" he laughed. "How can I miss it?"

He had promised Papiy and Lev Matveyev and all the others that he would come and watch with his own eyes. He and Papiy Podbelsky had written the proclamation, printed it at the press in Podolsky Street and signed it in the name of the Central University Circle. And they knew that he would be coming, would be in the hall, and everything would go according to plan. First, Lev would speak, then Papiy, then Lev would scatter the proclamations. The "speech-day" happened once a year. Andrei's presence meant a lot to them. It would give them strength.

"Taras, I have never asked you for anything before...."

"Why is today such an exception then?"

"Because they are on your trail. These arrests have not just been accidents. Can't you see they are closing in on you?"

He did see it. But the University revolt, if it took place, would be a reward that was worth the risk.

"You are no longer a stranger in Petersburg.... Hundreds of people know you.... And you are going to that "Babylon", which is full of informers and spies.... I know that you'll be

standing in full view, laughing and tossing your beard. You may even get into a fight, there's bound to be one."

He said, there probably would be. But he could not go back on his word now. If he failed to turn up, if Papiy and Lev did not see him before it started, the whole thing might be spoiled. All their preparations would be wasted. And why fear the risk so much? They hadn't much time to live anyway.

"I hate it when you talk like that!"

He silently pulled on his clothes, laced up his heavy battered shoes. He ought to have bought some new ones long ago, he had the money. But why? Sonya began to scold.

"You have no right to go! Your life is not your own to play with.... The Committee entrusted you to make the dagger thrust.... How can you put the whole enterprise at risk?"

Suddenly she buried her face in her hands and sat down on the bed. Shoulders bowed. Crouching. It was one of her attitudes; she would suddenly turn into a little animal, rolled up in a ball.

"Why, why, why? I'm ashamed..." she whispered through clenched teeth. "I used to be a happy person, I was never afraid of anything."

He tried to soothe her, kneeling by the bed and taking her in his arms.

"But now I'm afraid, I'm afraid for you."

"You mustn't be. There's no need. Remember what the Janitor used to say, 'The man who has conquered the fear of death is as omnipotent as God'."

"What fear of death? You are talking rubbish...."

"Well, fear of *my* death. That's rubbish too. You must overcome that as well."

"No! No, no, no! I want us to live long together. I want us to be happy. Why can't we be? We said, didn't we, that when we had done what we had set out to do, we would settle on a farm, plough the soil, read books...."

"Well, yes. But what books?"

She looked at him.

"What books? *Taras Bulba*...."

"Aren't you tired of it yet?"

"I wouldn't read it myself, of course, but when you read I can go on listening for ever. What else? Lukyanov about the Gaidamaks, Antonovich, George Sand. And, of course, our *Self-Preserving Notes*...."

The Self-Preserving Notes were their favourite reading in the evenings, just nonsense, but very funny nonsense. He saw that she was recovering. He had to go. In fact, he must run. Levka Matveyev, otherwise known as Kogan-Bernstein, and Papiy Podbelsky would be waiting for him in the street at the appointed spot.

But Sonya had had a premonition. Something was bound to happen today, and this was why she had pleaded with him not to go. She herself, however, at two in the afternoon was gathering her scouting party in Zabalkansky Street. She too was known to half of St. Petersburg.

"Well, Sonya," he took her hands and stared earnestly into her eyes, from which the look of supplication had not yet disappeared. "I also have a request of you. Please don't go to Zabalkansky today. Will you agree?"

Sonya laughed wryly. He kissed her, grabbed his hat and coat and ran out cheerfully, pulling them on as he went and feeling new strength flowing into his body. As he approached the University he saw first the stocky figure of Papiy standing alone smoking a cigarette, and then the lanky, red-headed Lev, who was haranguing some students. He noticed Andrei and was about to come over to him but stopped himself in time. A jumpy fellow. Lev was supposed to interrupt the speaker. Andrei hoped he would choose the right moment. He spotted Sukhanov among the crowd of students. They pretended not to know each other. To mark the University's anniversary the Minister of Education, Saburov, that cunning fox, a worthy viceroy of Loris, had arranged the abolition of the provisional rules and the restoration of the University regulations of 1863. Now was the time to show up all the hypocrisy of this "concession". Andrei climbed to the gallery. The "Gloria" was sung in unison. Professor Gradovsky gave his report, rather a boring one. The University enrolment, the extramural students, the honorary members and the number of grants had increased thanks to the generous endowments made by certain gentlemen. At the mention of Count Mengden Andrei gave a start. This was the owner of the house in Malaya Sadovaya! He remembered that tonight he would be resting while Trigoni, Isayev, Frolenko and one of the others worked. He tried to think who the fourth man was and this prevented him from listening and watching. At last, he remembered—Degayev! There was still something that he did not like about the man,

although Degayev was unusually keen. But what was the alternative? They were short of people. If the worst came to the worst, they would have to use some youngsters, like Lev and Papiy. Still, Lev was a live wire and capable of anything, and Papiy, a tough young fellow from the Urals, the son of a priest, could certainly be useful. He had a marvellous way of lowering and raising himself on one leg. Yes, he was a real gymnast. And gymnasts would be useful if there was a rumpus.

Suddenly there was a shout from the gallery; it was Lev's throaty bass.

"They haven't met the demands of all the universities!"

He was interrupting not Gradovsky but Martens. Martens went on mumbling like a sexton.

Levka boomed out again, "Give it a rest, speaker!"

There was a hubbub at once. The sound of scuffling and shouts came from various parts of the hall, down below as well. Andrei saw Papiy in his black frock-coat, unusually pale, elbow his way out of the crowd round the platform where the high officials were sitting, push the chairs aside, go up to Saburov and slap his face. Among the four thousand people present many did not see this action or understand what had happened. But Andrei had known this slap would be delivered and he was watching carefully as one might watch the unfolding plot of a well-known opera. Saburov sat very still and straight-backed; his face had become mask-like. Papiy disappeared. A shower of pamphlets floated down from somewhere. That was Lev's work. Then everything happened quickly. Panic spread, there were shouts of "Stop them!", "There they are!", "Give it to them!" The huge crowd rose to its feet and surged forward. Fights broke out. Andrei took no part and went quickly down the large staircase. He saw Lev escorted by his first-year friends make his way safely into the street. There was still no sign of Papiy.

Half an hour later he met them both at Hessia Helfman and Sablin's secret flat in Troitskaya Street. The plan had worked perfectly in every detail. Both were excited and poured out the story, laughing and interrupting each other, describing the behaviour of some of their acquaintances, the affray, the exclamations, shouts and expressions on the faces of the officials. It was some time before their excitement cooled. And they were happy! Andrei wanted to sit with them at this turning-point in their lives—today they had become "illegals" and would be

living here, at Hessia's, for a while until they were provided with new passports, clothes and money. He would have liked to chat with them, encourage and reassure them, and eat some of the nice things that Hessia had prepared, but he had to go. Today he had another very difficult and secret mission to perform, a mission of which no one knew or had the right to know except Grisha Isayev. Even Sonya did not know about it. And certainly she should not know! It was a blatant violation of the Committee's resolution. He had taken this sin upon himself, and upon Grisha as well, because the mission could never have been performed without Grisha.

Sablin burst into the room with a bundle of newspapers. As usual he was in a light-hearted, joking mood and full of indignation over some of the verses in the *St. Petersburg News* on the death of Dostoyevsky. He had been at Ivanchin-Pisarev's, and Gleb Ivanovich Uspensky had dropped in too and they had been reading these verses together and laughing over them.

"Listen to this: 'Lie in Abraham's bosom blest, splendid writer that you are, great mourner for all oppressed, your word was ever heard afar. For them you raised your voice in anguish because you yourself in exile languished....' What do you think of that? Pure Lebyadkin. Verses by Captain Lebyadkin. It's signed: Maxim Kovalev, peasant. These silly asses on the newspapers are displaying the people's gratitude. Incidentally, about the people's gratitude. Here is a certain sum to be contributed to our funds!" He placed several banknotes on the table.

"Where did that come from?" Andrei asked.

"From Gleb Ivanovich. I didn't ask him, he gave it himself. We were joking about this and that. What were the terrorists planning now, he wanted to know. Where would they join the wires next? So I told him in a dignified manner. Personally, I said, I would choose the Catherine Memorial and put a device under her robe. But the trouble is, there's no money! Our pockets are so bare, I said, that instead of going to Palkin's we have to make do with the cook-shop and we've forgotten what strong drink tastes like. Yes, I said, this revolution is enough to make you give up drinking altogether!"

Papiy and Lev gazed in astonishment at this joker who was on such easy-going terms with a famous writer. Sablin did not know either Papiy or Lev and this was the first time he had

seen them in his flat, but he rattled on cheerfully and with a lack of caution that Andrei quickly became alive to.

"And just then Gleb Ivanovich got his fee from the *Notes of the Fatherland.* For some reason they brought it to Pisarev's flat. And he gave me the whole lot! Here you are, you are welcome! But what for, I asked. For fixing a device under the Empress's robes or for keeping up the drinking?"

Papiy and Lev burst out laughing.

Andrei said, "You're a nice fellow, Kolya, but an awful chatterer."

" 'It's because I'm so witty I have to say silly things sometimes,' as my mother used to say...."

Andrei wanted to reply, "That great wit of yours will land you in trouble one day," but he held his peace. Sablin had only one answer to such warnings, "I'm not afraid, I won't let them take me alive anyway." Andrei knew he must go and Hessia was bringing in some hot pies and tea. Ah, lucky Kolya Sablin. There was no need for him to go to Palkin's. But Grisha Isayev was waiting in the Arcade, so Andrei said good-bye and rushed off, grabbing a couple of pies to eat on the way. Outside it was dark and the street lamps were on. Andrei walked fast, almost running as usual, and there was a faint sense of joy in the back of his mind. What was it? Oh, yes, the money! From Gleb Ivanovich. In his letters Nechayev had reproached them. Why do you give notice in the *People's Will* of such miserable donations—two rubles, five rubles, one ruble and a half? What you should print is Gospodin X. had donated to party funds five hundred rubles, Gospodin Y., one thousand two hundred. You must exaggerate, frighten, create a façade, make people tremble.

But how would this man who saw only the goal and only the good of the cause understand a decision that concerned his own life? Today an attempt was to be made to see him and tell him honestly what the Committee had decided. It would be very difficult to see him, and no less difficult to say what had to be said. In the upstairs gallery of the Arcade, where he was to meet Grisha, Andrei strolled back and forth in front of the entrance to Lent's Museum, reading the advertisements for want of something to do. "News! Miracle of the age! Comic bust of singing Jew! Finest achievements of mechanical engineering ever seen!" Visitors were entering in a steady stream. Schoolboys, soldiers, young officials, young ladies, skilled

workmen in black coats and top hats with modish narrow brims. For all these people the "Robot Negro Playing the Flute" or the "Robot Hussar Playing a Cornet" or the "Mechanical Dancing Couple" or the "Three-Headed Swedish Nightingale" or the explosion in the Winter Palace or the execution of a man at dawn on the Semyonovsky Square were miracles with approximately equal power of attraction. Andrei knew all this perfectly well and was not at all angry with the crowd flowing into the museum with such eager curiosity. There was also an exhibition of tortures modelled in wax and iron, a rogues' gallery, and a large collection of old and new instruments of torture, execution swords, and other curiosities.

At another time Andrei would certainly have gone in to look at the instruments of torture and the execution swords. He was invariably interested in such things, but now he was afraid to leave the gallery and miss Grisha. Presently Grisha appeared out of the crowd, smiling and with a rather heavy blond beard—now in the Russian rather than the French style. He was followed by a tall soldier. Grisha quickly introduced the soldier, murmuring the man's name so faintly that Andrei had to ask him again.

"I'm called Good Man," the soldier said.

"Just that—Good Man, and nothing else?" Andrei said with a laugh.

"There's nothing funny in it." The soldier frowned. He was a huge man of sullen appearance. "You're not supposed to know any more, gospodin."

Grisha explained. Nechayev had given all *his* soldiers conspiratorial names, and double ones at that. One for use in the ravelin, the other for use in the town. This soldier was called Good Man and Annushka. He was no longer serving in the ravelin and had been transferred to the Petersburg local troops. Now he would take Andrei to the quarters of a senior artillery man, where Andrei would be fitted out with soldier's uniform. Another man would take him on from there to the ravelin. Grisha said good-bye. Andrei set out with Good Man. The soldier was exceptionally grim and taciturn. He replied slowly and with obvious reluctance to any question. What cell was Nechayev in now? A pause. Then the sombre answer, "Number five ... where else would he be?" Where were the present ravelin soldiers from? Another long pause: from

Vologda and Archangel. When they had almost reached Malaya Pushkarskaya Street, where the senior artillery man lived, Andrei decided to ask about Nechayev. Did they have great respect for him?

Good Man stopped and stared at Andrei as if in the greatest astonishment.

"Try not to respect him!"

"But why so?"

"The look he gives you!..."

Now it was quite dark. Andrei was provided with a great-coat and soldier's cap and another soldier by the name of File took him to the fortress. Where did this power of Nechayev's come from? What did he do to people to make them obey him so uncomplainingly? The File was more communicative and related that "our eagle"—that was what they called him among themselves—knew everything about everybody, all their family and village background, as well as any witch. There he was, confined to the cell himself, but he commanded the people from there. "Did I not order my party to blow up the Winter Palace?" he had said, and so it had happened. "Did I not order them to shoot at the tsar?" And shoot they did. Even the commanders of the ravelin were afraid of him because there was not a disease that would touch him. He had been in chains for two years, his flesh had begun to rot, but he was still as alive as ever. They were afraid of him because—you could never tell—he might give the order to have them put out. The heir to the throne was under his orders too. And he was going to do away with the tsar, he said, because the tsar had betrayed the people. This mysterious man was surrounded by a dark cloud of credulity, of fear mingled with fearlessness, of fatalism and boundless trust. There was both deception and mystification in it—all for the sake of the great cause.

At the meeting of the Committee when Andrei had hinted that he might try to talk to Nechayev in person, if only through the bars of his cell window—there was such a possibility and in any case he would have to investigate the ravelin with a view to the future escape—everyone had pounced on him at once. How dare he think of such a thing! Ridiculous! Absurd! A criminal risk! The difficulties of the situation and impossibility of postponing the tsar's execution could be explained in a letter. Somebody proposed that the right of choice between

executing the tsar or organising their own escape should be presented to the prisoners themselves, Nechayev and Shirayev, but this was rejected. The execution took first place. This was what the party had been created for and what their people had died for. Certainly he could inspect the ravelin and its approaches, but on no account must he attempt to see Nechayev. In his comrades' ominous tone Andrei sensed a fear not only for his life but for the outcome of the operation. Of the tasks allotted in the process of the execution Andrei had been entrusted with the final act. If the tsar was not blown up by the mine, he would be attacked by the bomb-throwers; if by some miracle he escaped them, Andrei would administer the *coup de grâce* with a dagger.

And yet, though he understood his comrades' fears and the degree of risk, Andrei had decided to make this attempt. No one need know. As for the risk, it was no greater than those he usually ran in his everyday life, and this he was as accustomed to as a person grows accustomed to rupture. According to the soldier Orekhov, Nechayev's first envoy, there was no great problem about inspecting the ravelin from the outside.

It was about eight in the evening when Andrei and the File climbed down from the Zoological Gardens on to the ice of the Kronverk Sound and made for the ravelin. The dark mass of the fortress loomed up on the left and the ravelin looked like a low flat island. The soldiers on guard round the walls were friends of the File. He called to someone, there was a reply, and Andrei climbed the wooden landing stage and steps—in summer they probably rinsed their washing here—on to the low river bank. In his last letter Nechayev had sent a diagram of the ravelin showing the position of his cell. The ravelin was shaped like a triangle. It contained nineteen cells, but only five of them had windows in the outer wall; the rest looked on to the yard and were out of reach. Nechayev's cell was one of the five. It was in the side of the triangle that faced the fortress, and in a corner nearest to the Sound. Near it there was a warehouse. Now Andrei was escorted by two soldiers. They stopped at the first window. It was high up above their heads, but there was a box by the wall and Andrei jumped on to it.

"Who's that?" came a hoarse but very clear whisper from the darkness.

"Zhelyabov," Andrei replied.

"Aha, Zhelyabov! Splendid! Now listen, Zhelyabov, I have some important ideas. I jotted them down last night, knowing that you would come...." There was some faint illumination in the cell, perhaps from an oil lamp, but the man's face pressed to the bars was dark because the light came from behind. Andrei could see only that the man was very thin; in outline it was the face of a youth, almost a boy. "Can you hear me? Can you hear me well?"

"Yes, perfectly!" Andrei replied.

"Well, Zhelyabov, you've come just at the right time. I suggest that you urgently distribute the following manifesto: 'On the advice of the most gracious spouse, Her Majesty the Empress, and also on the advice of the princes, counts and so on, and at the request of all the nobility, we have decided that it would be a beneficial act....' Can you hear me?' To return the peasants to the landowners, to increase the term of service in the army, and to pull down all the Old Believer places of worship....' "

Evidently he was reading from what he had written. Another document was to be sent round to all priests in the name of the Holy Synod. This stated that the Emperor was afflicted with a mental disease, that prayers must be said at the altar for his recovery, but that no one must be told about this state secret. And there were some other manifestos, to the peasants, to the Russian armed forces, to the guards, grenadier and army regiments, to the cavalry, and the local troops. They were all read out with feverish haste, without a single pause. Andrei listened in astonishment. And gradually, as the seconds passed, he felt himself succumbing to a strange hypnotic force that reached him even through the barred window. For a moment, perhaps, it suddenly seemed to him that this was a brilliant idea. There would be no need to execute the tsar. All Russia would rise. But a second later he told himself that it was nonsense. The Chigirin scheme, Stefanovich's manifestos.... It had all been tried before and ended in fiasco. This man in his cell was cut off from the world. Only fragments of events reached him. He was fighting alone and building fantasies alone. How could he be told now that freedom and real life were to be postponed? And for no one knew how long.

"How do you write?" Andrei asked. "Do they give you ink?"

"No, I write in soot that I scrape from the ventilator. I mix it with lamp oil," came the rapid answer. "They threaten to block up the ventilator so that I cannot get any soot. Then I shall write in blood. I have tried already. I wrote one letter in blood, with my finger nail."

"Nechayev, I have inspected the ravelin," Andrei said, "and my conclusion is that an attempt to help you and Stepan to escape can be arranged. This month it is our duty to execute the tsar. All the preparations have been made. I am telling you of this supreme secret so that you will understand. After the tsar's execution we shall release you, but if we begin with you the execution may not take place."

There was a silence. Andrei watched the dark head against the background of faint smoky light. Then the voice came again.

"You have taken the right decision. We shall wait and we wish you success."

They talked for a while about various things, about ways of communication, about which of the soldiers were the most trustworthy, which needed money and who should be found work, and said good-bye. Andrei went back across the ice escorted by the File and another soldier. He kept silent all the way. He felt sad and depressed, conscious of the sudden burden of despair that he had brought to the man in cell No. 5. And yet there was a certain relief in this feeling. For a lie could only mean inescapable anguish, whereas the truth, even the most terrible and annihilating, was at some supreme, inaccessible point a relief to the soul.

For the prisoner in cell No. 5 there would be nothing but waiting—and the pride of his own strong spirit. He had chosen. Everyone realised that his choice was death. Andrei made his way home, almost dropping in his tracks. Sonya was lying on the bed with a hot-water bottle. She had some strange sickness. There would be a sudden agonising pain in her side, then it would disappear. She did not go to the doctor for fear of attracting attention and giving herself away, but Andrei could see that she was in pain.

"Where have you been all this time? Anya came round and said that you were at Hessia's in the afternoon, then went off somewhere."

She was smiling. That was bad; it meant that the pain was severe. He bent over her and saw the tears in her dark eyes.

"I was looking over the Alexis Ravelin. The devil knows how many slopes I had to climb. Well, an escape is possible, but it will take a lot of preparation."

"They told me there have been some arrests at the University. Until Anya came I didn't know a thing and tormented myself with fear. And that started the pain at once. But now it's gone and nothing hurts any more!"

While he prepared a meal and brought in a hot samovar from the landlady, Sonya began to tell her story. The scouts had checked every minute of the tsar's movements through the city that day. He had driven out across the Pevchesky Bridge and stayed longer than usual at the Mikhailovsky Palace. The return journey had been the same, along the Yekaterininsky Canal and the Moika.

Chapter Ten

The nights and days had merged into one. It all smelled the same of an earthy, grave-like dampness. There were no week days, only Sundays. Two Sundays had been wasted, one when the mines were not ready, and another when the tsar for some reason did not attend the changing of the guard.

And so there was one more Sunday left in life—the first one in March. It was now or never because their strength was running out. Andrei had been strangely afflicted of late; he would suddenly lose consciousness for a few seconds. These momentary faints usually happened during the day, indoors, during conversation, but once he was overcome when travelling by tram. No one noticed. He said nothing about it. The only thing he was afraid of was that he might lose consciousness underground. Actually, it was not really a loss of consciousness but a momentary blackout, and then a feeling of floating back from far away. But after the 20th there was no need to go underground. The moles had finished burrowing and Isayev and Kibalchich were waiting for Saturday to place the mine. The group of bomb-throwers had been made up: Timofei Mikhailov, Rysakov, Grinevitsky and Yemelyanov. Andrei had been building up this group, which was known as the terrorist group, gradually, since January. He kept an eye on each of them and had long talks with them, trying to test their resolution—but there was not much to choose from. The most steadfast were already behind bars.

Sonya had much praise for Grinevitsky. Andrei himself was sure of Mikhailov, perhaps because he reminded him of Presnyakov. Rysakov was rather doubtful; sometimes he acted boldly, sometimes was obviously scared of mere trifles. At meetings he was jumpy and nervous, would suddenly burst into foolish laughter and use learned words like "neutralistic", "idiosyncratic", "diapason", "socialism ex cathedra", but not quite in the right places. Yemelyanov, whom Anya Korba had recruited, having got to know him well through Annensky, the statistician and writer, was a mere youth. But he was a youth of remarkable height. He towered head and shoulders above everyone else in the street and Andrei had nicknamed him the "Special One". These were all young people, unformed as yet and unsteady. By any serious standards they needed tempering in the revolutionary crucible for a year or two. But what could be done when there was no one else and they could not wait—not even a month, let alone a year.

In accordance with his habit of going to the root, the *origin* of things, Andrei tried to understand what moved these young people. What impulse had carried them to this secret flat, where all the talk was of mines, daggers and, quite openly, of regicide. Grinevitsky was a Pole, so that was more or less understandable. Mikhailov was a true proletarian, he had worked at many Petersburg factories and belonged to the Workers' Section. Rysakov? Poverty, loneliness, no prospects in life, parents far away and no other relatives nearby. There was something unclear here. Books, reading? The desire to break the confines of humiliation and poverty? Even that could not be said of Yemelyanov. The son of a church sexton, he had been brought up by his uncle, a Russian diplomat in Constantinople, then he had fallen in with a family of liberals, the Annenskys. So here, perhaps, it was the talk, the books, the searches, even the deporting of the head of the family.

But all in all this wave that had brought them in was the spirit of the times, the discontent and unrest that reigned everywhere.

On Thursday at the flat in Telezhnaya Street that had just been rented—Hessia and Sablin had had to move urgently from Troitsky Lane in the middle of February because the police were on their trail—Andrei assembled the bomb-throwers, all volunteers, and Kibalchich explained how the bombs were made. No bombs were available at the moment. Grisha

Isayev, Grachevsky and Kibalchich were working on them in feverish haste. But to save time they had decided to show the volunteers how it was done in theory. Kibalchich used the drawings when explaining. They promised that by the next day, Friday, they would have one test bomb that could be tried out somewhere in a quiet spot out of town. Kibalchich had requested that there should not be more than four people. Otherwise their numbers would give them away. Kibalchich's mathematical tninking always amazed them. Why no more than four? Why not three or five? No, he was quite categorical about it, no more than four. Figures came before concepts in his mind. When someone asked if it was possible to make some bombs for self-defence out of nitrogelatin, Kibalchich replied, "Yes, if we were to use five or six pounds for every bomb." What did this mean? Reluctantly he explained, "They'll be too small otherwise."

And here was the Detroa restaurant. They had agreed to meet here, have a meal and then go on to the quiet spot out of town. All these young men had to be fed; they had lost their earnings when they became "illegals". Kibalchich arrived and said that the bomb was not ready. When would it be? Tomorrow, Saturday. At nine in the morning, beyond the Smolny Monastery, across the river. They dispersed. Andrei went home. Sonya was in. They lay together in each other's arms for perhaps forty minutes. Sonya said that she had no pains, but he could see that she had. He himself felt that he was about to faint and was afraid of dropping off to sleep. He lay with his eyes open. Sonya asked, "Where shall we go?" He said that every cock crows on his own dunghill. There was nowhere better than the Feodosia Uyezd. Another possibility was Bratslav in the Podolsk Province. Suddenly he remembered his grandfather and how they had parted on that hillock one blue misty morning, then the long dusty road, the heat, the sense of sorrow. Memories were a drain on the soul. He drove them away. If he ever recalled anything it was by accident, for only a second. At half past four they rose, dressed and went out into the street. They took a cab. In Bolshaya Sadovaya, near the Public Library, they stopped and paid off the driver. There they parted; Sonya was to meet Anya Korba somewhere nearby and Andrei had several contacts to make on the Nevsky. On the snowy pavement in front of the library they said good-bye to each other and Sonya added, as usual, "Be

careful." It was the last time she would say it. In Bolshaya Sadovaya he noticed he had a tail, a thick-lipped fellow. He had to make several circles—a trick of the Janitor's, getting away in circles, not in a straight line—before he could shake him off. The man from Moscow who was waiting for him in a coffee-shop had to wait an extra half hour. Then he had a meeting with a messenger from the ravelin, who had brought a letter from Nechayev. Nechayev had acquired a special respect for Andrei. The envelope was addressed, "for Taras, personally". A few days ago Nechayev had written a letter demanding the establishment of dictatorship in the party and proposed Andrei as dictator. That had caused much laughter. In the tavern where he had met the messenger Andrei tried to decipher the letter, which was written in code. There were some messages about the soldiers and some advice on how to deal with them. The File liked a drink now and then, the Sexton was most intelligent and devoted. They ought to set him up as the keeper of a small tavern. The main thing was not to leave them with nothing to do; they would go on the bottle straight away. They should be paid a modest wage, not more than twenty rubles and given presents for any clever work. But demand.... What should he demand? Andrei had no time to puzzle that out. He was late for his next appointment, with Trigoni. The letter was not very important. It was no use thinking about fixing up the soldiers after the escape, for no one knew when that would be. Trigoni was living in furnished rooms let by a Madam Messuro, on the corner of the Nevsky and Karavannaya streets. He ought to be back from Sukhanov's by now. As he was going up to the first floor, Andrei noticed that the door of the room opposite room No. 12, where Trigoni lived, was ajar. Through the chink he caught a sudden flash of movement as though somebody standing behind the door had drawn back.

Trigoni was sitting in his waistcoat, humming to himself, reading the newspaper and at the same time scraping out his pipe. A real "uncle", as Andrei had been used to calling Mishka since their childhood days.

"Hullo, uncle. It looks as if you've got the police in your corridor."

Mishka jumped up with an alacrity that always astonished Andrei; he lifted his huge body out of the armchair in a fraction of a second.

"The captain?" Mishka asked.

"What captain?"

"There's a naval captain living opposite. The day before yesterday he struck me as suspicious. He was rather obliging and tried to get me into conversation. I've decided to leave here."

"Wait a minute!" Andrei stopped Mishka, who had gone to the door. "Where are you going?"

"I'll ask for a samovar."

He went out. Andrei heard his loud voice.

"Katya, bring a samovar!"

Then there was a tramp of feet and sounds of struggle. Mishka was being dragged away. In Andrei's pocket there was a Smith & Wesson revolver and the envelope with Nechayev's letter in it. These bloodhounds would crack the code. Should he destroy it? Try to break out? He walked into the corridor and saw Mishka, that great elephant, being dragged into the room opposite. He was held by about six men, but at the moment when Andrei came out the corridor was empty and he made a dash for the staircase. Someone seized his arms from behind above the elbows, and below him on the staircase stood that thick-lipped fellow who had tailed him in the Bolshaya Sadovaya. He could not pull his revolver. He was already surrounded by four men holding his arms.

"Nobleman Slatvinsky? Nikolai Ivanovich?" A heavily moustached gendarme looked now at the passport Andrei had handed him, now with severity, a kind of affected, theatrical severity, at Andrei.

"Quite right. May I ask what you want?"

One of the detectives took the revolver out of Andrei's pocket.

"What we want is this little item," the moustached gendarme said, pointing at the revolver. "And one or two other things as well. Please, follow me."

They went down the stairs. A maid and two tenants, an elderly lady and gentleman, were standing in the hall at the bottom of the staircase and looking up with clearly expressed horror on their faces. The elderly gentleman whispered something to the lady in French. Two carriages were drawn up in front of the house. Mishka got into one of them. There was a soldier on each side of the door. Andrei said to the gendarme, "You would not have taken me in the street."

The gendarme grew purple in the face and looked even more severe, but said nothing and signed to Andrei to get into the other carriage. He was taken to the office of the city governor, and the first person he saw there was the ginger-haired, noticeably plumper but rather less ruddy-complexioned Dobrzhinsky.

"Zhelyabov!" the prosecutor exclaimed with a familiar and quite genuine Odessa liveliness. "So it's you?"

An hour later they were taken in the same carriages to the Remand Prison. They drove in through the gate. He still did not feel that this was the end. Suddenly he remembered. Yes, he had come out of this gate three years ago, after the Big Trial. Then, too, it had been winter. Around him was the strange city, the fierce cold, a certain vagueness, youth, hope.

On the next day, February 28th, Saturday, the following took place. The bomb-throwers met early in the morning, at nine, as agreed on the corner of the Nevsky and Mikhailovskaya, got into a tram and rode to the outskirts of the city to test the bomb. They chose a deserted spot and Timofei Mikhailov threw a tin packed with fulminating mercury. It blew up as expected. Zhelyabov was not there and the bomb-throwers wondered where he had got to. Then they went to Hessia's flat and waited for Zhelyabov there, but he still did not come. Hessia said, "He must be busy somewhere." But at the flat in Voznesensky Lane they already knew that Zhelyabov and Trigoni had been arrested. Perovskaya had waited for Andrei all night, the following morning and afternoon in a state of desperate anxiety and when, at about two o'clock, Petushkov, the janitor, a foolish and good-natured man, came to say that his superiors wanted to know whether all the tenants had spent the night in their flats and asked whether her brother, Nikolai Ivanovich, was at home, she realised that it was all over. Andrei had been picked up and they were trying to locate his flat. She told Petushkov that her brother had, of course, been at home that night and was now at work, then put together a few necessaries and went out by the back staircase into the yard, and from there through the tobacconist's into the street. Sukhanov was at the flat in Voznesensky Lane and Perovskaya asked him to help her clear the flat and carry out the heavy things and the nitroglycerine. This was done at once.

Meanwhile things were also happening at the cheese shop. A sanitary commission headed by Major-General of Engineers Mrovinsky had turned up all of a sudden. Bogdanovich was in the shop.

Over the past few days tension had been building up round the Kobozevs' establishment. The janitors were thought to have heard something untoward, the neighbouring shopkeepers had grown suspicious and reported to the police, spies had trailed Sukhanov recently when he came out of the shop and he had only been able to escape by taking a fast cab. All this indicated that the cheese mystery might collapse any day.

So when he saw the procession headed by a gentleman in a black fur-coat and general's cap, a police officer and a janitor approaching the shop, Bogdanovich stared weakly and told himself that the game was up. Against the back wall of the shop there was a wooden box in which the cheeses taken from the barrels were placed. General Mrovinsky tapped it with his cane and said that crumbs of cheese might fall down the chinks and then decompose. The chinks should be filled up. Good advice! Bogdanovich thanked him joyfully and promised to take action at once. In the shop there was a barrel and several tubs filled with earth and only covered on top with cheeses. Mrovinsky asked, "What is this? Is it all cheese?" "Yes, indeed it is, Your Excellency!" Pretending to be the perfect fool, Bogdanovich shouted and made his eyes bulge when replying. Noticing a damp patch on the floor near the barrel, Mrovinsky asked where it had come from. They had spilled some cream during shrove-tide. And so it went on till they reached the living room. Here there was a wooden casing from the floor to the window, which was removed when they entered the tunnel, then replaced. Mrovinsky went up to the casing, tapped it with his cane, pulled it, but not very hard, just lazily. It did not move. Bogdanovich's heart stopped. "What's this for?" the general asked. Bogdanovich bellowed that the damp had become troublesome, the smell was suffocating. Mrovinsky then went over to the window-sill and leaned on it to test its firmness. It stood the test, then the commission went into the back room that gave on to the yard. Here there were large heaps of earth disguised with hay, coal and sacking. Mrovinsky kicked one of them.

Soon after the commission had left, Yakimova turned up. Bogdanovich met her with a mad dance and shouts of, "He

liked our Pussy! Hurrah, hurrah! He fell in love with our little cat! He kept looking at it and, before he left, he actually bent down and stroked it! Long live the generals who like little cats!"

At three in the afternoon there was a meeting at Figner's flat. Perovskaya, Korba, Sukhanov, Grachevsky, Frolenko and the tenants themselves, Figner and Isayev. Perovskaya kept pacing up and down. "Sonya, sit down!" they begged her. She did not hear. Her face had suddenly become old and set, her body stooped. Now there could be no postponement or retreat. It must be tomorrow! Tomorrow, Sunday, at noon. They had one night left to complete the bombs. Not one of the four was ready yet.

Sonya said, "It's got to be tomorrow, to relieve those who are in there of as much responsibility as possible—do you understand?"

They all understood. She was thinking of him every minute. Suddenly they would notice that she was just not there, oblivious of them all, and with torment in her eyes. But the next moment she would be back, giving instructions and commands with indomitable firmness, taking instant decisions. There were signs that Hessia and Sablin's new flat in Telezhnaya Street was not safe either, so everything must be brought here, to Voznesensky Lane, specially the nitroglycerine and all the technical gear for making the bombs. But what should they do if the tsar did not drive along the Malaya Sadovaya? The answer to Perovskaya's question was unanimous.

"Go in with the bombs alone!"

Neither the bombers nor the signallers could be warned in advance, but they had known since the day before what to do: at ten in the morning they must be at the flat in Telezhnaya Street. Perovskaya would take Zhelyabov's place. They knew her just as well as him. They shouldn't be told that he had been arrested.

"I want to repeat Taras's words to you," Perovskaya said, and smiled. "He said not long ago, 'Now nothing will stop us. Even if we wanted to stop ourselves.' "

She sent Grisha Isayev to the cheese shop to lay the mine. At five in the afternoon Sukhanov, Kibalchich and Grachevsky set to work with the intention of working all night and making the four bombs by the morning. Perovskaya and Figner helped them, doing the simplest things—moulding the weights, cutting

and shaping the oil cans that were used as cases and filling them with nitrogelatin. All the others left, so as not to be in the way. The lights were on and the fire blazed all night. It was past four in the morning when the exhausted women gave up. Perovskaya herself went to bed, knowing that she would need strength. When they awoke at eight, two bombs were completely ready and two needed only to be filled with gelatin. With the two bombs in a bundle Sonya took a cab to Telezhnaya Street. Sukhanov followed her. A little while later Kibalchich set out with the two remaining bombs.

The bombers came in the morning. Perovskaya confessed to them that Zhelyabov had been arrested. It came out suddenly, against her will, because she was thinking of him all the time. One of the bombers had said, "This is where Zakhar will stand!" And she could not help telling him. The bombers were upset. Clearly it was not just fear for themselves or for the cause, but a true sympathy, and she looked at them with real affection. She suddenly noticed how young they were. Grinevitsky was handsome, with a dark beard and tired eyes. He said that he had not slept during the night, he had been writing a letter—"just in case". He would like to read it to her, or that she should read it herself if she had the desire. She said that she would like to and would most certainly read it, but during their hasty discussion she forgot and remembered it only when he had gone. Rysakov was chain-smoking. Timofei Mikhailov looked calmer than anyone else but kept his fists clenched. The lanky Yemelyanov screwed up his eyes and smiled strangely with his wide mouth. His face was perfectly boyish.

Perovskaya explained to each of them where he should stand and what the signals would be. About the Malaya Sadovaya she said, "They will be waiting for him there", and they thought that there would be more bomb-throwers like them, waiting in that street. She picked up an envelope from Hessia's desk and sketched a rough diagram. Here was Malaya Sadovaya, Italyanskaya, the Manège, here was the Yekaterininsky Canal. They must stand here, here and here, and from here there would be a signal, a wave of a handkerchief, and here, where this cross was, the execution must take place. As she looked at these youths devouring her with their eyes, their ears, their pounding hearts, Perovskaya thought: these boys are all we have left instead of our heroes. There is no choice because

no one can stop us now. Yes, these four young men—the pale, Jesus-like Grinevitsky, the ever-silent Mikhailov, Rysakov with his wide cheekbones and grey pimply face of a half-starved seminarist, the huge and yet sickly Yemelyanov with his small, child-like head—had undertaken to strike the blow that was to set Russia moving on a different course.

The Emperor was passionately interested in two things, the possibility of crowning the Princess Yuryevskaya and Loris's project for electoral reform. The two tasks, apparently so remote from each other, were in fact closely intertwined and united inasmuch as they had the same enemies. The Anichkov Palace party, the young heir to the throne and those associated with him, like Pobedonostsev, hated Yuryevskaya as much as they did the constitution. And Yuryevskaya herself and those who sheltered under her wing were constitutionalists solely for the purpose of discomforting their enemies. Loris, however, understood the need for concessions, even if they were only such trivial ones as were suggested in his project. They were not even concessions, but merely a gracious, symbolic gesture. "We concede!" What had actually been proposed was that the general commission that was to draft a number of laws based on the results of the senatorial inspections ordered by Loris should include, besides high officials, some elected persons from the provinces where the Zemstvo existed and also from some of the major towns. The Bills considered by the commission had to be put before the Council of State and it was proposed that this Council should also include—with a voice but no vote—several representatives from public institutions that "displayed special knowledge, experience and outstanding abilities".

It was this shadow of a reform, not even of the laws themselves but merely of the process for preparing laws, that for some reason assumed in the realms of Petersburg rumour-fed high and not-so-high society the almost laughable name of the Loris-Melikov constitution. Some attached fabulous hopes to this constitution, others were frightened by it, others were enraged, and even the German Emperor Wilhelm was alarmed and asked his nephew to do everything possible to preserve the power of the government. As though it were a question of some encroachment on the autocracy!

In the past year Alexander had come to trust Loris more and more implicitly. Had not the count proved his worth? The country was visibly quieter (not counting a few minor revolts in the villages), the government's prestige had risen, the nihilists had drawn in their horns and at the same time the firm hand of the Department was steadily roping them in, one after the other.

And on Saturday Loris brought the joyful news that the terrorist leader Zhelyabov had been arrested. Alexander was so excited that he hurried upstairs to tell the princess. But, as usual, Loris could dampen enthusiasm as quickly as he had awakened it. There were signs, he said, that these criminals were capable of a desperate act and it would be inadvisable to attend the changing of the guard at the Mikhailovsky Manège. Alexander protested. When, in heaven's name, would this quarantine end? Surely all the ringleaders had been captured by now. They knew this for a fact thanks to Okladsky's evidence. The villainous party had been crushed. Who was there to be afraid of? Two guard-changing ceremonies had already been cancelled and again they recalled the fortune-teller in Paris, who had predicted that he would survive seven attempts on his life.

"I have so far survived six. I still have one in reserve!"

That evening in the princess's drawing-room, while playing cards, Alexander accidentally knocked a photograph of himself off the table. It fell on to the carpet. This trivial incident suddenly threw the Emperor into a deep depression and he at once recalled other bad omens of recent days. The day before an unusually bright star had been seen with two tails, one erect, the other down, and some ten days before he had begun to notice dead pigeons on his window-sill every morning. It turned out that a huge bird of prey, either a kite or an eagle, had made its nest on the roof of the Palace and all attempts in the course of several days to kill it had failed. Finally, it was caught in a trap but still managed to fly, lifting the trap with it until eventually it fell on the Palace Square. A stuffed image of the gigantic kite was to be placed in the cabinet of curiosities. This incident was so absurd that Alexander had refrained from telling the princess about it out of consideration for her feelings. There had been another unpleasant thing. He had once again experienced the nightmare of the blood-stained crescent moon. The tsar had often been visited by this dream and five

years ago the Russian ambassador in Constantinople had made inquiries of the Turkish magician Ali-Effendi. The magician had given the following explanation. There would be war between Russia and Turkey and in punishment for this Allah would send assassins upon the tsar from among his own people.

The photograph falling on the carpet brought it all back and he lost any desire to continue the game. The princess, who had read everything in his downcast face, begged him not to attend the changing of the guard the next day. His other partner at cards, a lady in waiting, also implored him not to go, and this irritated him because everyone now considered it his duty to tell him what to do and worry about his safety.

On the morning of March 1st, Alexander rose as usual at nine. He walked with Yuryevskaya for some time through the halls of the Palace, talking about Loris-Melikov's project, which had yesterday become an act of state reform, would be signed today and the following day, Monday, be published as an *ukase.* At yesterday's interview Loris had been quite ill and this morning Alexander had sent a messenger to inquire after his state of health. If the Count was still unwell, the Sovereign would visit him himself. The document must be signed today—and done with it! A quarter of an hour later Loris arrived. He bore himself bravely, like a soldier, but he looked far from well; his face was an earthy colour and his eyes bloodshot. Alexander knew from hearsay that the Count's illnesses were a painful business both for himself and for his doctors. He never allowed himself to be examined and insisted on being treated purely on the basis of what he had to say about his pains and sensations; he would not even allow them to put a thermometer under his arm. Still, what could you expect from an Asiatic! The Count firmly evaded all talk of his illness and, after the document had been signed, stated that a suspected shop in the Malaya Sadovaya had been inspected but nothing had been found. This Malaya Sadovaya had been the subject of much discussion for more than a year now, ever since last winter, when Totleben had informed them from Odessa of certain rumours passed on by Goldenberg. But they still could not find anything. Loris, however, once again insistently requested that the tsar should not attend the changing of the guard. And Alexander, who had decided in the morning to go, again began to waver.

Having entered his usual state of vacillation, Alexander listened vaguely to Loris's story of some subtle moves by Valuyev and the intrigues of certain individuals, a story which he embellished as usual with such colourful Russian sayings as "heigh-to, steep is the mountain" and "either the falcon's wings are tied, or is every path to him denied?"And when Loris had left and he was told of the arrival of the Grand Duchess Alexandra Iosifovna, wife of his brother Constantine, he had almost overcome his vacillation and decided not to go. The Grand Duchess, on learning that he would not be attending the ceremony, expressed her disappointment. Her son Dmitry was to be on parade in the Manège for the first time that day.

Then he suddenly made up his mind *to go!* And since he was eager to go, this decision heartened him and, finding himself suddenly in much better spirits, he quickly went upstairs to the princess and said that he had signed the *ukase* on elected representatives and that from the Mikhailovsky Palace where he would visit the Grand Duchess Yekaterina Mikhailovna after the changing of the guard he would drive straight home to arrive not later than half past two. And after that they would spend the whole day together, until dinner with the Grand Duke Vladimir. The princess begged him not to drive along the Malaya Sadovaya.

"Tell Frol to take the road along the canal," she said just before he left. "Along the Yekaterininsky Canal, do you hear?"

The guard in the courtyard bellowed its zealous and deafening, "Long live, Your Imperial Majesty!" Police Chief Dvorzhitsky was standing beside the carriage. His own sleigh, in which he and two police officers were to follow the royal carriage, was standing by, in the closed gallery. This gallery at the royal entrance to the Palace had been constructed recently with the specific aim of making it impossible for people of ill-intent to watch any preparations for the tsar's driving out. The coachman Frol Sergeyev knew how to urge his horses to a canter in no time.

Colonel Dvorzhitsky, who was now acting as the tsar's personal bodyguard, kept a keen eye on his people from the sleigh. He had only just driven along the whole route between the Palace and the Manège, posting squads of police and mounted gendarmes. For the first time in many months Dvorzhitsky felt able to relax in the warm police sleigh. There

must be an end to everything, even madness. At nine o'clock that morning, he and other senior police officers had been summoned to the city governor's office and heard a confirmation of the rumour that had been circulating the day before, to the effect that Zhelyabov, the ringleader of the anarchists, had been arrested. Great news! This was the one they had sought unsuccessfully for so long. There were only two or three more of them to be captured and subversion would be a thing of the past. Fyodorov, the governor, a foolish and fussy man—Dvorzhitsky could not stand him—made a grandiloquent speech in which he only stopped short of saying that he himself was the chief eradicator of subversion.

"I have invited you here, gentlemen, to express my heartfelt gratitude. A great Russian thank-you to you all, gentlemen!"

The changing of the guard of March 1st was to be performed by an engineer battalion of the Life Guards. The thunderous bass of the parade sergeant-major announced the Emperor's arrival. The troops were called to attention. The gates swung open and Alexander in engineer's uniform rode into the Manège on horseback, escorted by his retinue. Having reached the middle of the Manège, the Emperor turned his horse to the battalion and made a signal with his hand. The band played the national anthem. Then there was cheering for two minutes.

The engineers marched past the tsar twice. It was noted that after the parade Alexander chatted with the French ambassador General Chanzy.

After the parade Alexander drove to the Mikhailovsky Palace to see his favourite cousin Yekaterina Mikhailovna, with whom he took tea. At a quarter past two he returned to his carriage and set out for the Winter Palace. The royal company rode swiftly down Inzhenernaya Street to the embankment with the Cossacks galloping at their side. They turned down the road leading along the Yekaterininsky Canal. The embankment was deserted except for a boy dragging a basket along in the snow, an officer walking towards them, and a young man, hatless and carrying a bundle, who was standing on the pavement and, when the carriage drew level with him, suddenly threw the bundle under the horses' hooves.

This was Rysakov, who quite against his will had happened to be standing first in the line of bombers. Timofei Mikhailov

had hesitated at the last minute and not taken the position he had been appointed to. That morning at the café they had agreed where each should stand. The "blonde" in charge of the operation—Rysakov did not know her name was Perovskaya and thought of her as the "blonde"—had told them to arrange who should stand where on the principle of friendship. The closest friends should stand together. But there was no friendship at all between them. They had not known each other long enough. Everything was done in a hurry and at the same time it dragged, as if they were acting in their sleep, as if they were under the influence of some dictating will. It seemed to Rysakov that even the blonde, for all her amazing command and grasp of things, was acting not of her own volition but in obedience to this massive, overwhelming will. At the café no one ate anything except Pussy, which was the name by which Rysakov knew Grinevitsky. They were told, "I will wave my handkerchief and this will mean that you are to go to the canal." He and Pussy walked down Mikhailovskaya Street and saw the blonde blow her nose in a white handkerchief, whereupon they immediately headed for the Yekaterininsky Canal. But Timofei Mikhailov was not there. They stood on the embankment together a few steps apart. From the direction of the Manège—they could have seen him a mile away—the towering figure of Yemelyanov was approaching.

The blonde was already on the other side of the canal. She waved something white. This meant that the horses had turned the corner. Now they were charging down on them, wheels rumbling, hooves clattering, like a flashing thunderstorm.

By some mystical coincidence Rysakov justified his name, but no more. He executed the *rysaks,* the horses. The tsar emerged from the carriage unharmed. The smoke was clearing. The little boy who had been dragging the basket along in the snow had been mortally wounded and was screaming. Rysakov was seized and overpowered. The tsar came up to him. Someone was twisting his arms painfully.

"Who is this?"

"Citizen of the middle class Glazov."

"A fine fellow, to be sure!" said the tsar. To Rysakov his face seemed white and puffy like dough. All around people were shouting, "Your Majesty! Make haste! Turn back! To the Palace as soon as possible! Thank God, the sovereign is unharmed!" What thanks was it to God? They were twisting

his arms. He felt as if an iron collar was being tightened round his neck. The tsar took a few paces in the direction of Grinevitsky—and the air broke apart with a crack like thunder. Everything was wrapped in smoke. A minute later the tsar was being carried to the sleigh standing behind the wrecked carriage. A large crowd had gathered. Everyone was shouting and screaming.

Grinevitsky, who had blown himself up with the tsar, was taken to a court hospital in the equestrian department, where he died eight hours later. He became conscious for a short time before his death and, when asked what his name and rank were, replied, "I don't know." The tsar died one hour and twenty minutes later in the Palace. Only a few people who knew of the fortune-teller's prediction suddenly realised that the Paris "witch" had been right, after all. The tsar had safely survived the seventh attempt on his life—Rysakov's bomb which had killed two Cossacks, a boy and the horses—and had died from the eighth attack. But this, of course, was nonsense, a pure coincidence. But one person, who was by no means an oracle, had known for sure what would happen on Sunday and, as he paced about between two and three o'clock in the afternoon in the cage of the Remand Prison—it was the exercise period after dinner—he listened to the sounds that reached him from the city, hoping to hear an explosion. He did not hear it and could not have done. All the same he listened persistently and intently. His mind, his senses, his whole being during those minutes, between two and three in the afternoon, were incapable of doing anything else.

Chapter Eleven

Andrei's first testimony on the day of his arrest, Friday, February 27th, after prosecutor Dobrzhinsky had exclaimed joyfully, "Zhelyabov, so it's you?" was the following brief statement in his own handwriting:

"My name is Andrei Ivanovich Zhelyabov, aged 30, religion ... (here he wrote nothing), a peasant of the Tavrida Province, Feodosia Uyezd, village of Nikolayevka. My work is the liberation of my country. I have a father, mother, sisters, brother (Alexandra, Maria, Olga, Mikhail). They all live in the

Feodosia Uyezd; I am married and have one son. I do not know the whereabouts of my wife and child. I think they must be with my father-in-law Yakhnenko in the Tiraspol Uyezd, Kherson Province. I was charged in the Trial of the 193 and acquitted. I have been living on funds collected for the liberation of the people. I lived under many assumed names, which I do not intend to disclose. I admit belonging to the People's Will party. I admit that I organised the Aleksandrovsk attempt and joined the wires of the battery, i. e., in the attempt to blow up the Imperial train on November 17, 1879, near the town of Aleksandrovsk, where I lived under the name of Cheremisov. My present quarters are in Petersburg. I refuse to say where, or to name any of my acquaintances. When I was arrested, the loaded Smith and Wesson revolver I had with me was taken as well as several cartridges, and also two sheets of paper in a sealed envelope written in code which I am not, of course, prepared to disclose. I request that this whole statement be believed and any crossings out ignored. A key was also taken.

Andrei Zhelyabov."

For two nights he slept beautifully, better than for a long time.

On the third night, the night of March 1st, he was not allowed to sleep. He was roused suddenly at about two in the morning, told to dress and taken to the Department of Police at the Chain Bridge. His thoughts were calm. Were they taking him to the "commission"? Were they going to torture him? There had long been rumours that the "commission" of the former Third Section made use of torture. It was said that a section of the floor was suddenly lowered and the person thus boxed up to the waist was tortured. They said that Karakozov had been tortured. It was done in secret. But why *in the middle of the night*? Andrei had long since accustomed himself to thoughts of the possibility of torture. There had been much argument about it and most of them had decided that there was no torture nowadays. Times had changed and a certain degree of legality existed; but the question Andrei asked himself was: what are they to do if a gentleman like myself falls into their hands? I shall not say a single word. Nor shall I speak under torture, of course. But these fools don't know that.

Such were his thoughts as he rode swaying in the grave-like darkness of the carriage and with some difficulty shook off the

desire to sleep. He was taken into a room where an elderly general was sitting at a desk. The general stared at him very intently, his whole face wrinkled with the effort of concentration. The wrinkled little face resembled that of the more unpleasant kind of lap-dog. There were two other officers in the room, one a gendarme, the other from the legal department; and a fourth person, his old acquaintance Dobrzhinsky, was also there, but his face was no longer joyful. It wore a petrified expression.

They brought in a woman. She looked at Andrei and shook her head.

"No, I don't think that's the one."

The woman looked familiar. Then he realised that this was the landlady of the flat that Rysakov had rented and Andrei had occasionally visited. A minute later Rysakov himself entered. But in what a condition! He was incredibly pale, there was a huge bruise under one eye and his glance was almost lifeless. They shook hands. Andrei realised that he had been beaten. But what for? Where? Suddenly it struck him—the crowd, as with Solovyov....

"Do you know this individual?" the general asked.

Andrei said that he did. By what name? He told them because he realised that they knew already; but he was racked with curiosity. He could see from Rysakov's battered appearance and the rigid, death-like faces of the officers that something had happened. He asked one of the officers in the uniform of a prosecutor of the Chamber of Justice—afterwards he learned that this was Count Plehve—what had happened and why he had been roused out of bed at two in the morning. After a silence that lasted about two seconds, during which his face grew threatening and seemed to swell, the prosecutor announced, "An attack has been made on the sacred person of His Late Imperial Majesty."

So, it was done. He wanted to roar with laughter, and he smiled as he stared at the enraged faces around him. Rysakov was taken out. What was happening out there? In the city, in the country? What was happening at the University? In Kronstadt? The country, of course, was silent, it had not yet woken up to the fact, not understood it. But in the capital, perhaps, it had begun. And what had happened to Sonya? That was all—the storm passed instantly, without an answer. They were asking him something. What did he know about the crime?

"Gentlemen, this is no crime, it is the greatest thing that has ever been done for the liberation of the people, it is a great day for the revolutionary party...."

"Silence!" the general shouted, slapping the desk with the palm of his hand. "Stop this propaganda! Report the facts!"

"I am doing my best. As I was saying, the party's aim has been achieved. Ever since the execution of Kvyatkovsky and Presnyakov the Emperor's days were numbered. His movements were watched even when he was going about his ordinary business. I can say that I did not take part in the attack only because I was in prison, but morally I am fully in support of this revolutionary feat."

They asked something about the shape of the bombs and the kind of explosive. He explained in detail. He enjoyed telling them about it. How had the place for the attack been selected? Oh, that was a complex question. It depended on the habits of the target of the attack and these habits had to be discovered by means of long and regular observation of the target....

"Silence!" the general shouted.

He was again torn with the desire to burst out laughing, but restricted himself to a smile. The gendarme, a lieutenant-colonel, stared at him as if in a daze. The general kept slapping his desk and shouting. The interrogation lasted several hours. Then the general and the prosecutor left and Dobrzhinsky and the lieutenant-colonel took Andrei downstairs to the basement floor and by way of a long corridor without doors, evidently a subterranean passage, passed into a building that was as cold as outdoors, climbed to the upper floor again and stopped outside a closed door. Dobrzhinsky said, "Now you will see a person who is well known to you."

The door opened. Two gendarmes who had apparently been dozing on a bench sprang to attention. A body was lying on a table at the back of the room. The table was of the special kind used for laying out the dead. There was a raised part nearer the wall so that the head rested at an angle and the face was easily visible. The dead man was Ignaty Grinevitsky. He looked much older and his white face bore a strange expression, either of contempt or boredom, that it had never had in life.

Andrei said that he preferred not to make any statement concerning the dead man. Everyone was utterly exhausted by the sleepless night. Dobrzhinsky and the lieutenant-colonel made no attempt to press Andrei further and asked no more

questions. They simply entered a brief note in the records and took him back the way they had come. He was driven to the Remand Prison. When he was alone in his cell, he lay down on the bed, pushed the pancake-like pillow under his head and started thinking.

Something else besides joy had entered his mind. Suddenly he began to think about himself. The party had triumphed, but what devilishly bad luck for him! The usual bad luck to which he was for ever condemned. Everything he undertook ended in failure: the fiasco at Aleksandrovsk, the failure in the Winter Palace, the muddle at the Kamenny Bridge, and now, when everything had been prepared for the last and final blow, fate had plucked him out of the fray just one day before.... And the wretched Kolya Rysakov with his flabby schoolboy's brain in which everything—revolvers, Robespierres, girls from the Nevsky—was mixed up, Rysakov whose desire to turn the world upside down had to compete with the desire to tuck into a large sausage sandwich and wash it down with a cup of coffee— this raw youth was to represent the party! What good would such a trial be to anyone? It would be mere nonsense, a mockery. But the trial was more important than the bomb. If the bomb could not stir this lifeless bog, then there must be a trial, speeches, an open battle for all Russia to see!

He demanded paper and ink. And this is what he wrote, addressing it to the Prosecutor of the Chamber of Justice:

"If the new Emperor, having received his scepter from the hands of the revolution, intends to adhere to the old system in relation to regicides, if Rysakov is to be executed, it would be a grave injustice to spare my life, since I had made many attempts on the life of Alexander II and it was mere chance that I took no physical part in his death. I demand to be associated with the act of March 1st, and if necessary will make any disclosures that may be needed to implicate me. I request that this statement be passed on to the right quarters.

Andrei Zhelyabov.

"March 2, 1881. Remand Prison.

"P. S. I am disturbed at the thought that the government may set an outward show of legality higher than essential justice and adorn the throne of the new monarch with the corpse of one young hero only for lack of formal evidence against me, a veteran of the revolution. I protest against such

an outcome with all the moral strength I possess and demand justice for myself. It would be nothing but cowardice on the part of the government to erect *one* gallows instead of *two.*

Andrei Zhelyabov."

On receiving this statement, the investigating authorities were so surprised that they produced a special report on the inspection of this document signed by Major of the Gendarmes Bek, Assistant Prosecutor of the Chamber of Justice Muravyov, who was to be prosecuting council at the trial, and two witnesses. Andrei himself felt a tremendous sense of relief. Now everything was as it should be. Only one thing made him unhappy: the thought of Sonya. It would be a terrible blow for her. She, of course, would be hoping for his salvation, she was probably concocting all sorts of wild plans, but after such a letter what salvation could there be? This meant the scaffold. And very soon, too. Perhaps in a week or perhaps in two days. Sonya would be crushed, destroyed by grief, his comrades would applaud, and one or two good friends—some of them were like that—would say, "Taras does like to create a sensation!" But what it all boiled down to was that he could not act otherwise.

All that had happened to him over the last year was *the only thing that could have happened.* There had been no other ways open to him. He had followed a set course, like rainwater flowing into a water-butt. But for Sonya there was this: she loved him as much as she was proud of him. And that would be hers for ever—to be proud. On the night of March 2nd he again slept exceptionally well.

On March 3rd, the newspaper boys were shouting in the streets: "Fresh reports about villainous attack!" And Sonya, who had been hurrying along the Nevsky with Arkasha Tyrkov, bought a paper and read it. It ran as follows: "The recently arrested Andrei Zhelyabov has stated that he was the organiser of the act of March 1st." Arkasha Tyrkov, a pleasant young man, a student, secretly in love with Perovskaya, also read it, and for some time they walked on in silence. Sonya held the paper in one hand. She opened it several times and read it again.

Arkasha asked, "Why did he do it?"

"It must have been necessary," she replied.

No, it did not rob her of hope or strength. The last week of her freedom began, a week of great relief, and at the same time desperation. Desperation because she was separated from him and relief because all fear had vanished and everything was clear.

She wanted only one thing—to be reunited with him by any means. "Sonya has lost her head," they said. None of them realised that during this week she was more inventive, brilliant and calm than ever before, even though she seemed to be merely dashing about and going mad. Everything was falling apart. On the night of March 3rd, the police came to the flat in Telezhnaya. Hessia opened the door and was arrested at once; Kolya Sablin, unwilling to be taken alive, shot himself. A police ambush was laid at the flat and in a few hours Timofei Mikhailov was caught. The hall porter asked him where he was going and Mikhailov blurted out the first number that came into his head, number 12. There was no such number on that staircase. The police officers stationed behind the door came out at once and invited Mikhailov into the flat. Mikhailov made a dash to get away, firing as he ran. He wounded two policemen badly, but was captured. Searches were being made all over the city. Anybody who looked suspicious, who was wearing spectacles or had long hair, was picked up in the street. There were cases of mob violence. And during these days Sonya was almost constantly in the street, dashing about the city, meeting all sorts of people, some of whom she hardly knew, trying to find some way of rescuing Andrei, no matter how improbable. She looked for a means of penetrating the district court where the case was to be heard. She searched for an empty flat in Panteleimonovskaya Street, near the Department of Police, hoping to organise an attack when Andrei was taken for trial. She consulted with the military people. But nothing came of it, she could arrange nothing. And the loss of the flat in Telezhnaya, which had happened immediately after the killing of the tsar, meant that someone among those who had just been arrested and had been at that flat must be giving things away. It did not take them long to think who—Rysakov! So Bogdanovich and Baska were ordered to abandon the shop and leave Petersburg without even waiting for the charge to be removed from the mine.

Another person who thought incessantly about those awaiting trial and execution was the writer, Count Lev Tolstoy. There had been a sudden thaw that morning and melting snow had made the road impassable. While out walking he had met an Italian boy with a hurdy-gurdy and some birds, who had told him that the tsar had been killed by a bomb, and since then he had been unable to think of anything else—only about those mad people and the forthcoming execution. Gradually he became absorbed in that heart-rending and only too familiar state of being possessed by one thought, a state that would not pass of its own accord but had to find an outlet in some form of action, and by now he was beginning to realise what it would be. Finally, over his morning coffee he confessed to Alexeyev, the tutor of his elder children, that he was tormented by the desire to write a letter to the son of the murdered man and ask him to pardon the murderers. Alexeyev, a former nihilist and Fourierist, supported the idea warmly, "The main thing is that by writing this letter you will clear your conscience of the guilt of participation in the execution." Sofya Andreyevna heard this, ran into the drawing-room and began storming angrily at Alexeyev, "Vasily Ivanovich, what are you saying?! If you had been speaking to my son and daughter and not my husband, who does not need your advice, I should tell you to leave this house at once!" "I obey, Madam, I shall go...." There had been a temptation to say something rude.

And now he knew for certain that he would write it.

In the murky hour of twilight, when the candles had not yet been lighted, he was sitting on the leather sofa downstairs—they had just finished dinner—and still thinking of the same thing. Suddenly he recalled how as a boy he had seen a peasant being marched to the place of execution. He remembered his childish perplexity and the question he had asked himself, "Is it I who is so dull and foolish that I don't understand why? Or is it they, the adults?" He had convinced himself that the adults were right and knew quite well why this was being done. But it turned out that they, poor people, had not known after all!

The disease had struck deep and the doctors were in despair. They had tried every cure. They had used strong and resolute measures, then abandoned them and allowed the disease to take its course in the hope that it would drive itself out of the organism. But there was no sign of recovery; the disease was

becoming more and more virulent. What else could be done? Try some other cure unknown to the doctors—a strange cure. They could not be combated by killing and destroying them. Their numbers did not matter; what mattered was their thoughts. To fight them one must fight spiritually. Their ideal was general prosperity, equality and freedom. In order to fight them one must oppose them with an ideal that would be higher than their own, that would include their ideal. The French, the English, the Germans were also fighting them, and just as unsuccessfully. There was only one ideal, one way by which evil could be destroyed. There must be a flash, a lightning flash, from the height of the throne; an example of supreme mercy must be shown! And thousands upon thousands would understand! Millions would understand. The son had forgiven his father's murderers. But how could the son be persuaded? This was a moment that would decide the fate of Russia for the next hundred years. And with these thoughts he fell into a doze on the leather sofa and saw a parade ground, a black platform, preparations for execution, but it was not these madmen who were to be executed, but he himself who was being led out in execution robes to the black scaffold. The hangman was tying the noose, beside him stood Alexander III and the judges, and suddenly everything changed and instead of the executioner it was he himself who was holding the noose and preparing to perform the execution.

He awoke in horror with a numb feeling in his heart. And then he went to his desk and started to write.

"I, a wretched, weak and sinful man, who has not heard the call, write to the Emperor of Russia and advise him what to do in the most complex and difficult circumstances that have ever existed...."

The letter ran to many pages. He concluded it as follows:

"They will say, if you set them all free there will be slaughter because when a few are set free there are small disorders and when many are freed the disorders are accordingly larger. They reason thus because they speak of revolutionaries as if they are bandits, a gang of criminals, and when they have all been caught, it will all be over. But this is not at all how matters stand. It is not their numbers that count, it is not a matter of destroying or banishing as many of them as possible, but of destroying their essence, of providing another essence. What are revolutionaries? They are people who hate the

existing order of things, who find it unsatisfactory and have in mind the foundations for a future order of things that will be better.... There is only one ideal that can be opposed to them: the ideal from which they themselves spring, and which they misunderstand and blaspheme, an ideal which includes their ideal—the ideal of love, forgiveness and repaying evil with good."

After some revision the letter was sent to Strakhov with a request that it should be passed on to Pobedonostsev, the recently appointed Director General of the Holy Synod, and that he should be asked to pass it on to the tsar. They knew that there was nobody whom the young tsar respected more than Pobedonostsev, the man who for many years, since the days of his youth, had been his tutor and confidant. But what was more, Alexeyev remembered how six years ago Pobedonostsev had helped to obtain the release from prison of Alexeyev's friend, the "God-man" Malikov. Tolstoy sent Pobedonostsev a covering note saying that he knew him as a Christian and therefore had no hesitation in making this important and difficult request of him.

At this time the former lawyer was living in anticipation of a great change that was to affect his whole life, and his thoughts were in quite a different vein. He had just sent the tsar a letter: "If the former sirens continue to sing you the song that you must acquiesce and go on pursuing the liberal course—for the sake of God do not believe them.... The scoundrels who killed your parent will not be satisfied with any concession and will only become more frenzied in their rage. They can be stopped, the evil seed can be uprooted, only by a life and death struggle, by blood and iron." After this he hastily sent the tsar another letter containing some extremely important advice, "In the name of God, take heed of the following:

"1. When you go to bed, you must see that your door is locked—and not only in the bedroom but in the other rooms as far as the outer entrance. A trusted person must make a close examination of the locks and see to it that the inside bolts of the leaf-doors have been firmly closed.

"2. You must make sure every evening, before sleep, that the bell wires are all intact. They can easily be cut.

"3. Every evening an inspection must be made under all furniture to see that everything is safe.

"4. One of your aides must spend the night close to you, in these same rooms.

"5. Are all the people of your entourage reliable? If anybody gives the slightest cause for suspicion a pretext can always be found for removing him."

And suddenly Strakhov appeared with Tolstoy's letter. Pobedonostsev read it at once and refused to pass it on to the tsar. It must have astonished him and seemed utterly monstrous. And Tolstoy was horrified at Pobedonostsev's refusal. "God grant that he should not reply to me," he wrote to Strakhov, "and that I should not be tempted to express the horror and disgust that he evokes in me." And further in the same letter: "I cannot write of other matters until this terrible business that is hanging over all of them has been settled." But events were moving rapidly towards a decision. The winds over Russia had changed abruptly.

Tolstoy still tried to act and to send his letter to the tsar through other channels and Pobedonostsev probably got to know about it. And then the capital was astonished by the philosopher Vladimir Solovyov. At a public lecture on March 28th, while the trial was actually on, he suddenly began to speak of the forthcoming sentence and appealed to the tsar to "forgive the unarmed", an appeal that evoked both confusion and exultation among his audience. Pobedonostsev then wrote the tsar his last, desperate letter of that month, saying that an idea had been set afoot that utterly horrified him. "Fear is already spreading among Russian people that Your Majesty may be presented with distorted ideas and persuaded to pardon the criminals. Can this happen? No, no, a thousand times no—it cannot be that before the whole Russian nation at such a moment you should forgive the murderers of your father, the Russian Sovereign, for whose blood the whole land (but for a handful of individuals that have grown weak in mind and heart) demands revenge, and is grumbling loudly that it has been delayed.... At this moment everyone thirsts for vengeance. Any of the scoundrels that evades death will at once lay fresh traps. For the sake of God, Your Majesty, let not your heart be influenced by the voice of flattery and dreaminess."

On this letter Alexander wrote: "Rest assured, no one will dare to come to me with such proposals. All six will be hanged, that I promise you."

VOICE OF N. I. RYSAKOV

Why did I have to throw first? We had made no such agreement. It was a tragic misunderstanding. I, being the youngest, should have been standing in reserve, so to speak, as number three or four and carrying a bomb just in case, but Mikhailov got cold feet or perhaps he played a trick on us, and the numbers got mixed up, that was how it happened. The blonde waved her handkerchief and I threw. Speaking confidentially, I, being the youngest and least experienced, was not obliged to stand in that position and Zhelyabov would never have put me there. But he had been arrested. And without Zhelyabov everything went haywire. Zhelyabov kept us all on a tight rein. He could do what he liked with any of us.

And that's what he did to me—bent me to his will like a bit of rope. Yes, like the stuff Gospodin Dobrzhinsky was talking about, on the first day. He told me how they do it. He knows, he's seen it. Gospodin Dobrzhinsky seems to be a very clever man and he's not spiteful either. He never gets angry, never shouts, always talks in a calm voice and gives you cigarettes, and, above all, he's sympathetic. For example, he sees that I'm young and inexperienced and he explains things to me. They put you on a bench. Throw a white thing over you, a kind of hood or burial robe, and then when you are in this robe, they put the noose over your head and bring it down round your neck and draw it fairly tight, but not too tight, not so as to choke you. The rope, he says, is not very thick, he's had a look at it. Touched it with his hand. Because, if it's thick, the noose won't tighten at once and that's the whole trick of it, for it to tighten at once, in a second. It's made of hemp, of course, retted and scraped on a comb, and the thickness is measured according to the number of ply. There are two-ply, four-ply, six-ply ropes. And Russian hemp rope, he says, is valuable and goes for export abroad. Gospodin Dobrzhinsky told me all this on the very first day, and without any spitefulness at all.

And I also told him everything I knew, right from the first day, because death is so terrifying! Oh yes, it's terrifying all right. Unbearably so. You see, I've hardly had time to live, I've never seen anything good—only hunger, poverty, no prospects. I'm nineteen years old, my parents are lower middle class, my father runs a saw mill in the Vytegorsk Uyezd, Olonetsk Province. I studied at the uyezd school, then at the

Cherepovets modern school and we had a teacher there, Vasilyev, a nihilist from among the exiles. What did I see in my childhood and adolescence? Only poverty, nothing but poverty. The poverty of my parents, the poverty of the peasants and workers. I remember how after the sixth class I spent the holidays with my father in the settlement of Kovzhinskaya Zapan, there were crowds of workers there, about 300 engaged in rafting timber—that's terrible work—and I was well aware, you might even say scientifically aware, of their economic condition. At the time I was reading the books by Vasilchikov, studying the German Constitution and Scherr's book *The Comedy of World History*. In 1878, I entered the Mining Institute and in view of my extreme poverty was given a grant by the administration. I met Shirayev. I was intimate with a woman who had been intimate with Shirayev. She was arrested soon after his arrest and I was also hauled off to the police station at that time.

But what could I say, what secrets could I disclose? The only thing I knew for sure, the only secret I had discovered was the secret of hunger. I had been starved on every count, if I may say so. I had known the pangs of ordinary hunger, for a bit of meat, and of being short of a ruble to go into a shop and buy a pair of shoes, and I had been starved of people, starved of women. I was hungry for everything. I was unfed and unhappy in every way. I had to have some kind of woman. Even an old and ugly one. I needed friends that could understand me and promise me another life in which I wouldn't be lonely and poor. As a man that had no right to anything I met the socialists and saw that they carried their right in their pocket. In the barrel of a revolver. Zhelyabov turned my life upside down. Suddenly I saw that this man, just as poverty-stricken, lonely, uncared for and homeless as I, was nevertheless strong, almost all-powerful!

Zhelyabov had a beguiling way of talking that made it quite impossible to be critical of him or to form any definite notion of what he said. There was just an impression of something brilliant, and that was all. But that "all" had tremendous power, perhaps hypnotic power. Zhelyabov convinced me that terror was inevitable in the socialist movement. If the government, he said, for the sake of its own interests, can make an amendment to the divine commandment "Thou shalt not kill", surely the party has a greater moral right to do so for the sake

of the people's good. After the holidays, when I visited my father and saw the hardships the people were suffering, the disease, the way the anthrax and famine were killing people off, and so on, and was badly upset by what I saw, Zhelyabov made skilful use of my state of mind. So I joined the terrorist group. It was by no means easy for me. I could not overcome an instinctive loathing of blood. Please note that there is a great difference in the various means of committing murder. It is possible to strangle with one's hands and relish the victim's agony, just as one might from stabbing with a dagger, and such cynicism was expressed in the words of Perovskaya on March 1st. A shot demands less moral strain. And throwing a bomb without seeing its effects entails almost no spiritual pain. But if the killing goes beyond the limits of ordinary crimes, if its results is the true, socialist good—for example, a better life for the peasants and workers—then there may be no moral torment at all. I did not regard this attack even as murder, I never imagined the blood and sufferings of the wounded. The attack struck me as a kind of happy event that would take society forward to a new life. How that man had managed to throw dust in my eyes! No, I didn't tell all this at once. Of course, I said a lot on the first day, I disclosed the address in Telezhnaya Street, named the person killed by Pussy and Mikhail, and told about Perovskaya and Zhelyabov, but I kept quiet about a lot of things and mixed some things up on purpose. About Perovskaya, for instance, I said she was a brunette. But she is, in fact, a blonde, and a very fair one at that. I didn't say that she was blonde until the next day. And about Zhelyabov I said that he had a light brown, French beard, though in fact it's a big dark one, and that's why they called him the Beard or Papa. I twisted things, unconsciously trying to help them. But during the first night.... I saw my own death—at the end of that four-ply rope that Gospodin Dobrzhinsky had talked about, and it was so clear that I began to choke and croak and I thought I wouldn't live till morning.

Why should I die just because of the mere chance of our numbers getting mixed and my being in the first position, I thought. After all, I wasn't the one who killed the Emperor. After my bomb, thank God, he was still alive. Let me live just a little longer. Just four years, say. Until I'm twenty-three. Or even two years! It's such a little time, it hardly matters, but for me two years is just enormous. I have hardly lived, hardly had

a taste of life. Just two years and then I'll agree to put my head in the noose voluntarily, and I'll even thank them for it. My greatest thanks for two years' happiness because, you see, it's happiness just to be alive. The wise men keep racking their brains and asking, "What is happiness?" But it's just in that simple fact. And after March 2nd I began to tell them everything I knew. Gospodin Dobrzhinsky squeezed everything out of me, turned me inside out; I was like a soldier's booty that had been ransacked by a regiment. I had nothing left but my skin. All my insides, all my thoughts, words, hopes, memories I had given to Gospodin Dobrzhinsky. But even that skin, the mere shell that was left to me was so precious that I wanted to keep it. No matter how. Now that there was just the skin left, nothing mattered, I just didn't care.

Gospodin Unkovsky, my defence council, suggested that the gonorrhea I was suffering from might be treated as an extenuating circumstance. I realised that this might go against my reputation, but I agreed. I had picked up this disease in the autumn. It was in a mild form and did not worry me much, but the lawyer insisted on having me medically examined and I was examined on March 20th. I knew I looked awful, like a corpse. Some bluish purple spots had appeared on my face. The doctors could not make out what had caused them and suggested various reasons. But I knew: it was *from the fear of death.* When I was taken to identify Arkady, he recoiled from me, and a few hours before that I had been taken to see Perovskaya and I realised that she didn't even recognise me at first. But the doctors, the ruthless swine, concluded that there was "no nervous disorder, and no malfunctioning of the mental abilities either. As for the chronic urethritis this disease has had no detrimental effect in the psychological sphere." I did my very best to reply to Gospodin Dobrzhinsky's questions. For the first two days I attached some importance to his promise, as a decent man, that my disclosures about people and addresses would not be entered in the report—and they weren't either—but my long disquisitions about socialism, the workers' organisation, and economic revolution, were noted down and Dobrzhinsky never interrupted me, but on the contrary, listened with sincere and keen interest. Soon, however, I no longer attached any importance to that promise at all. I realised that there were other reports besides these and sooner or later everything would be found out, and anyway

what did it matter what anyone would say or think about me? After all, it was not a question of modesty or shamelessness, but of life or death.

And when I was summoned for interrogation on March 11th and confronted with Sofya Perovskaya, I immediately said that she was the blonde who had directed our movements on Sunday, March 1st, and drawn that diagram on the envelope. She had also brought the bombs in a bundle. Perovskaya looked at me with such hatred in her little blue eyes that I wondered how I could be so unabashed, why my voice didn't falter. But it was because everything had been squeezed out of me already. And the outer skin that was left had no ability to falter or feel embarrassment.

After that I identified Arkady Tyrkov, Yelizaveta Olovennikova and Kibalchich, then I identified Vera Figner from a photograph and named all the workers I could remember from among those I had seen around in the workers' circles. Do you know what those night interrogations are like? When they won't let you sleep and as soon as you begin to nod on your chair and fall sideways they give you a shove and it's "No sleep for you! Answer the questions!" They promised me my life. Right up to the end I believed that promise and even at the trial, when I heard the words "To suffer the penalty of death by hanging", I still went on believing it. I thought they were just saying this for other people's benefit and I would get a special message later. But nothing more was said. On the other hand, they went on scraping everything out of me. Even five minutes before the execution Dobrzhinsky was trying to find out something. And I still believed him. Even when they put the hood on and adjusted the noose, I still believed that I was just about to be pardoned. The executioner was knocking the bench away from under me and I still tried to cling to it with my feet, I could hear him cursing, and then he kicked the bench, but I still tried to hold on because I was hoping right up to the very last second....

And yet, you know, on March 1st, when the soldiers and the public attacked me and pressed me to the ground, someone shouted, "Give him to us, we'll tear him to pieces!" And then there was suddenly another explosion and terrible panic and everyone falling to the ground and I said to them, "Don't be afraid to die, it's bound to come one day." At that moment there was not a person on earth who feared death less

than I. Oh you, dear people, who will live in a hundred years' time, will you not feel, will you not hear the howling of my soul that has destroyed itself for ever?

Clio—72

No, the huge Russian ice-floe did not split, did not crack, or even shudder. And yet, something did shift in the glacial thickness, in the very depths, to reveal itself only decades later. That spring, however, there were only a few weeks of fear; that was all the unpleasantness that the St. Petersburg authorities experienced. Absurd rumours were to be heard. New attacks were expected. It became known that the Executive Committee had written an impudent letter to the new tsar demanding a general political amnesty and an assembly of representatives of the whole people. The young tsar's advisers recommended putting St. Petersburg under martial law and leaving this accursed place for Moscow. The driving force behind all the government's actions in March 1881 was fear. It expressed itself in the indecision over the coronation, the postponement of the trial of the regicides, the vacillation concerning the project that the late Emperor had already signed and, ultimately, the total destruction of Loris-Melikov's brain-child. The power of the Count himself melted with every passing day. His place behind the Russian throne was being taken by a new demon: Pobedonostsev.

And yet the party that had inspired this almost mystical terror was in fact drained of all strength. It had no people left at all. On March 10th, Perovskaya was arrested on the Nevsky; she had been recognised by the woman who kept the small grocer's where she did her shopping. Four days later the members of the scouting party Arkady Tyrkov and Yelizaveta Olovennikova were arrested. Kibalchich was picked up on March 17th. He was arrested coming out of the library reading room of the retired General Komarov, which the revolutionaries had often visited. The police had re-equipped it to meet their needs. A special room had been made for an agent who could observe the readers through a crack and pick out people that were wanted. This agent was Okladsky. After Kibalchich's arrest Frolenko was captured at his flat and in the course of the next ten days Podbelsky, Aronchik and Isayev

fell into the hands of the police. With the help of the traitors Merkulov and later, Degayev, the Executive Committee was finally smashed. Tikhomirov, nicknamed "Tigrych", soon went abroad and began putting out a revolutionary publication, the "Messenger of the People's Will", but six years later he asked the tsar for pardon and expressed total repentance. He became a sincere monarchist, edited the "Moscow News" and died in 1923. Four long-livers, Morozov, Vera Figner, Yakimova and Frolenko, survived all misfortunes, twenty years' confinement in the Schliesselburg Fortress and lived to a great age. Anya Korba and Sofya Ivanova also lived to be very old and died in Soviet times. The remaining members of the People's Will party perished very soon on the scaffolds and in the dungeons. The naval man, Sukhanov, was executed in Kronstadt in the presence of the ships' crews. Barannikov, Kolodkevich, Langans and Teterka did not endure the Alexis Ravelin for long and died either of scurvy or tuberculosis. Kletochnikov starved himself to death in protest against the inhuman regime of the ravelin. Aronchik went mad and rotted to death in his cell in Schliesselburg. Isayev died of consumption, surrendering himself to God before he died. Grachevsky in a desperate struggle with his warders poured lamp oil over himself and burnt himself to death. The death of Shirayev and Lilochka Terentyeva was a strange one; they screamed in agony before dying and suddenly fell lifeless to the floor. It was rumoured that they had been given poisons in order to extract certain information. Alexander Mikhailov, nicknamed the Janitor, lived in the Alexis Ravelin for two years short of ten days. He was done to death in an isolated cell in a separate corridor without any neighbours. Mikhailov's comrades in the Trial of the 20, who, like he, had been sentenced to hard labour for life, had enjoyed the last comfort of being able to tap messages to each other. Mikhailov died in complete and utter solitude and no one knows what he felt or what he thought in his last months.

Chapter Twelve

Now he desired only one thing—that the trial should begin as soon as possible.

At the interrogations by the gendarme officers and the court

investigator Knirim he answered questions briefly and casually. Why the devil should he waste his powder in empty rooms, alone with an inkwell and a waxen official mug? The real talking would be done in court. Besides, he wanted to frighten them. At the interrogation on March 4th he said that in January when he had called for volunteers to kill the tsar forty-seven men had come forward. That day he was being questioned by Major Bek and Prosecutor Muravyov together. The prosecutor gave a start and turned pale when he heard about the forty-seven. Andrei deliberately played down his own importance: "I was allowed the honour of organising the attacks.... I was given the task of...." It could easily have been entrusted to any other of the agents. After all, he was only an agent of the Committee, and only of the third class at that. This belittlement was necessary not at all for his own sake—not a bit of it, he was sure to be hanged!—but to create the impression that the main forces were invulnerable and at liberty. Yes, frighten them, that was the thing. With a wry smile he recalled Nechayev. Poor Sergei Gennadiyevich would not succeed in changing his fate. By the end of the third week when he knew what the charge would be and that he was to be tried by the Special Court of the Senate, suddenly during the night—again he was not sleeping—a thought occurred to him. Why wait for the trial to begin? He must get in his blow first. The street-fighters' rule.

On the day before the trial, March 25th, he sent the President of the Court the following statement:

"Taking into consideration *first,* that our activities, which by order of the tsar are to be considered by a Special Court of the Senate, have been directed solely against the government and to its detriment alone, that the government, as the injured party, must be regarded as an interested party in this trial and therefore not competent to judge its own case; that the Special Court, consisting of government officials, is obliged to act in the interests of its government and to be guided in this not by the voice of conscience but by government instructions, arbitrarily called laws, this court is not competent to try our case;

"*second,* our activities should be regarded as one manifestation of the open and generally acknowledged struggle that the Russian Social-Revolutionary Party has for many years been waging for the rights of the people and the rights of man

against the Russian Government, which took power by force and maintains itself in power by force to this day;

"the sole *judge* in the case of this conflict between the Social-Revolutionary Party and the government can be only the whole Russian *people* by means of direct voting, or else, which would be nearer the mark, in the person of its legal representatives in a properly elected *Constituent Assembly;*

"and, *third,* since this form of court (a Constituent Assembly) is impracticable in regard to us personally, and since a trial by jury represents to a considerable extent the social conscience and is not bound in its activities by an oath of loyalty to one of the interested parties in the case;

"on the above grounds I declare the Special Court of the Senate incompetent to try our case and *demand a trial by jury* in the profound conviction that a trial by social conscience will not only acquit us, as it acquitted Vera Zasulich, but will also express the country's gratitude for activity of special benefit to the nation. March 25th, 1881. Andrei Zhelyabov. Peter and Paul Fortress."

Obviously the trial would be held as the authorities wanted it held, but it was important to place obstacles in their way. This statement would be discussed, read aloud and perhaps would find its way into the newspapers. He remained awake for the rest of the night in an agony of impatience. Would morning never come! The trial was due to begin at eleven. He paced about his cell, thinking what he should say. He had refused to be represented by counsel and would conduct his own defence. No, he would not be defending himself! That was the whole point, that was why he had refused, because he was defending not himself, but the cause. What better defender could it have than he? In the middle of the night, the lock clicked and a gendarme officer entered quietly carrying a lantern. It was the same officer that had brought him here from the Remand Prison. Andrei knew his name: Sokolov. A squat, heavily-built man with an astonishingly impassive face that looked as if it had been preserved in spirits. Andrei had never seen any ordinary person with eyes like this gaoler's; they were the least alive and least mobile part of his face.

Fixing his bulging frozen-fish eyes on Andrei, Sokolov said softly, "It's not allowed to run about your cell at this hour. Lie down and rest."

"I'm not running, I'm walking. That is within my rights."

"No, you are running. Am I to sit here and watch you in case you dash your head against the wall."

"You needn't expect that. I need my head for tomorrow."

The gaoler obviously had no intention of leaving. Andrei stared into his eyes. Yes, there was a glimmer of life there, but a strange, repulsive life, perhaps the life of some amphibious creature or a triton. Mockingly he wondered whether this was perhaps an emissary from *the beyond.* Perhaps they all had triton's eyes over there?

"Lie down and stop running," Sokolov said, "otherwise I'll move you to another cell that you won't be able to run about in."

The gaoler went out as quietly as he had entered. The lock clicked. The panel over the peep-hole was raised and Andrei again saw that bulging, icy orb steadily observing him. He remembered what Plekhanov had said, "Is it not victory to have focussed the eyes of the world on yourself?" Well, here was an eye that was focussed on him—until the panel was lowered. Andrei sat down on the bed. He did not want to walk any more. He reflected that when there was only a little of life left one felt a passionate desire to live—but in the past. And he began to recall things he had not remembered for years: the stone building of the gymnasium in Kerch, faces, conversations, voices, the dusty locust trees, the crimson sunset sky.

It was a sunny, dazzling spring day, they met in the big corridor and he managed to touch Sonya's hand, but a gendarme flung his arm back with a fierce blow. He saw that Sonya was very thin. They were all thin and yellow-faced with bloodless lips. Kibalchich seemed to be the calmest. He smiled at Andrei and, when they came together for a few seconds at the door of the courtroom, said quickly, "I have been working on the design of a flying machine."

"Kolya, you are a genius!" Andrei actually laughed in astonishment. "What, in your cell?"

"Yes, they were some old ideas of mine. I had never had time to work them out. And here there were no interruptions at all."

Kibalchich was jerked forward. They entered in single file with a gendarme between each of them. The room smelt strongly of polished boots. They were marched in and seated

in the following order: Rysakov first, next to him, Mikhailov, then Hessia, then Kolya, Sonya, and he himself last. It was a great stroke of luck to have Sonya beside him. When they sat down she bent forward and whispered, "My only wish was that we should be together.... Isn't it good?"

"Yes, it is," he nodded.

He saw Sonya smile and a powerful hand seemed to squeeze his heart. The president of the court, Senator Fuchs, and the members of the court with their aiguillettes, uniforms, breast ribbons, frock-coats, decorations, gold braid and grey heads, their creaking, shuffling, and coughing because of the cold clear morning, entered almost at the same time as the accused from another door and began to take their seats. What if his father had suddenly turned up here and seen this mountain of gold braid, these pompous faces with their side-whiskers, had seen that they were all looking at him, Andryushka Zhelyabov! He felt no fear whatever, although this was all preparation for his death. The men sitting before him were his executioners. They were eager to get on with the business of killing him and his comrades. It was for the performance of this task that they had attended carefully to their toilet that morning, combed their hair, surveyed themselves in their mirrors and had good breakfasts, relishing the fact that the death of these criminals would not take place at once but in four or five days, so that the pleasure would be prolonged. But he thought of them and their monstrous curiosity without malice. Even death held no terrors for him. Matter was eternal. The molecules of which he was made would simply pass into a different state, that was all. But they would not disappear, there could be no disappearance. The president said something to the Clerk of the Court and he began to read some instruction from the Minister of Justice, the formal pretext for transferring the case to the Special Court of the Senate. Plain straightforward killing was not good enough. Everything had to be backed up with papers.

"I have received a document...."

"First tell the Court your rank, Christian name and surname," Fuchs interrupted.

"Peasant of the Tavrida Province, Feodosia Uyezd, Nikolayevka village, Andrei Ivanov Zhelyabov...." His voice sounded good. In general he felt completely calm. A deep silence reigned and all faces in the courtroom were turned towards him with devouring interest. No, he felt no malice.

Suddenly it was the beginning of June, the great hall of the gymnasium, the headmaster, the teachers, the old archpriest Bershadsky, the stout Kondopulo, and there was the same intense silence as they all looked at him and waited. And then, too, after sleepless nights and excitement there was just the same sudden composure. Everything was repeating itself, it had all happened before, only then he had been facing the huge unknown, the possibility of a school medal, of the right to civil rank of the fourteenth class, and now was facing something he knew only too well—death.

"On the 25th instant I wrote from the fortress to the Special Court stating that in view of the fact that it is a crown court the Special Court of the Senate is not competent...."

Fuchs nodded.

"I shall resolve your doubts for you in a moment. Clerk of the Court, read out the decision reached by the court in procedural session today."

The Clerk of the Court read out something long and clumsy, consisting of various clauses, articles and paragraphs, from which it followed that no action should be taken on Zhelyabov's statement and he should be informed of this accordingly.

"I am satisfied by this explanation."

Yes, he was satisfied because he had said the main thing aloud and this had been put down in the records. It had been heard in court, where there were not only officials but also many newspaper reporters. There were even artists. He could see one over there, scratching something in his album. The first small victory had been won!

"Now I propose that you should answer my questions." Fuchs had also realised that he had been forced to give a little ground and the expression on his face had become even more unbending and his voice even more aloof. He looked like an old man, although he was not old, only forty-five. The bald patch, the pince-nez, the grey beard. The head of the gymnasium Gospodin Padren de Carnet had also liked to assume this air of a dispassionate servant of justice: "Though you are the son of a peasant and he is a nobleman, I condemn him and not you, but you too will be suitably punished."

"What is your age?"

"Thirty."

"Are you of the Orthodox faith?"

"I was baptised into the Orthodox Church but I reject

Orthodoxy, although I recognise the essence of the teaching of Jesus Christ.... I believe that religion without deeds is dead, and that any true Christian must fight for the truth, for the rights of the weak and oppressed, and, if need be, suffer for them. That is my faith."

There was a creaking of chairs in the courtroom and a murmur. It sounded rather like indignation. Fuchs continued in the same tone of official impartiality.

"What was your last address and occupation?" He told them where he had lived and that he had served the liberation of the people. This had been his sole occupation and he had been utterly devoted to it for many years. Another stir and murmur of voices. They hadn't liked that! Well, gentlemen, you'll have to get used to it. It's going to be like this all the three days. There must be nothing here that will please you. Then the prosecutor Muravyov made his speech. He was of that breed of young men that are often described as self-assured and presentable. He demanded that Goldenberg's testimony be read. Andrei demanded that Semyon and Kolya Kolodkevich should be called as witnesses. It was a hopeless request, they would not be called, but still it was a good thing to make them retire for deliberation. Sonya told him in a whisper that she had been visited by her mother. Loris had summoned her and asked her to influence her daughter, but her mother, the good woman, had said that she had long since lost all influence over her daughter. What was going on outside? What news from the city? Mother did not know. She was far removed from all that. And it was impossible to talk. There was a gendarme sitting right next to them and listening. So she had only asked her mother to send this dress and white collar for the trial.

Muravyov gave Andrei and Sonya a piercing glance and looked at Fuchs deprecatingly. He was obviously displeased that they should be talking and the President did not interrupt.

"I've known Kolka Muravyov since I was a child," Sonya whispered. "When father was Deputy Governor in Pskov, his family and ours were neighbours. He used to come and play in our garden."

The members of the Court returned. The reading of the charge began. They knew it all from beginning to end. He found himself wondering who was left of his old teachers at the gymnasium. Who would read the reports of the trial and be

horrified? Trigoni had told him that the names of those who had finished school with a gold medal were engraved in gold letters on a board of honour. What would they do about that, poor fellows? They did not realise that disappearance was impossible, even if they destroyed the whole marble panel with all its names. The witnesses spoke of the tsar's last words and gestures, of his "it is cold, cold" and "take me to the Palace, I will die there" and "Kulebyakin, are you wounded?"and of how he had bent over the dying boy. There were sounds of weeping in the courtroom and people wiped their tears. Then evidence was given about Rysakov and about Kobozev and the experts made their statements. On the third day, Muravyov spoke. He was theatrical, loquacious and intent upon furthering his career. And when he said, "...But lo, from out that bloody fog there loom the grim figures of the regicides..." Andrei gave one of his booming laughs that frightened the ladies, and Muravyov drew himself up and exclaimed, "When people weep, the Zhelyabovs laugh!" It had all been decided beforehand and there was no meaning in it, and yet it did have a certain far-reaching and tremendous meaning and Andrei took the floor many times to explain whence they had come, and why they had come, to kill the tsar. We are not anarchists. We are statists, we recognise that the state must inevitably exist insofar as common interests exist. But the point is that we criticise the existing economic system. Fuchs: I must interrupt you. You are using the right of defence to expound theories. No, I am merely confirming what I heard from the prosecutor, that the event of March 1st should be regarded as a historic event. Gentlemen of the Court, a glance at the records of political trials—that open book of life—will satisfy you that public-spirited Russians did not always act by throwing bombs, that in our activities there was youth, the rosy youth of lofty dreams, and if that youth is now passed, we are not to blame. Fuchs: You are exceeding the limits which I laid down. Confine yourself to your own attitude. I am coming to that. After trying various ways of acting for the benefit of the people, the method we chose in the early seventies was to assume the position of the working man.... The peaceful propagation of socialist ideas.... This movement that involved no bloodshed and rejected violence, that was not revolutionary but peaceful, was crushed. The aim of my life was to serve the common good. For a long time I worked for this aim by peaceful means and

only later was I compelled to resort to force. I would put it like this: I, for example, would have renounced terrorist activity if the external conditions had changed. Have you nothing more to say in your defence? No, in my defence, nothing. Sonya was looking at him all the time he was speaking. A 3 a. m. the Special Court returned from the room where it had been considering its verdict. Questions were read out, then they again disappeared for another long spell, and at 6.20 a. m. they returned again: death by hanging.

The tumbrils turned out to be ordinary carts, only much higher. The bench on which they were to sit was about fourteen feet above the pavement. It looked absurd, but so did everything else: the grey cylindrical trousers, the black prisoner's jacket, the black peakless cap. It was a little after six in the morning, they had been wakened at six and given tea, and now they were in the icy dawn-lit yard, the horses were stamping, and Rysakov who was taken out to the cart first went sagging at the knees. In fact, his whole body seemed to sag and he had hold on to things to support himself. All the time, whenever it was possible, Andrei looked at Sonya, and she at him. He had never seen such a look in her eyes as she had now. He climbed on to the high cart and sat down beside Rysakov on the bench with his back to the horses. A man of immense stature with a great spreading beard and a grey face, like grey, rain-washed stone, and small eyes, like a bear's, glittering blue out of the grey, came up to him. He was wearing a blue half-length coat and wide black trousers. He immediately seized Andrei's arms and forced them back behind his back. Andrei felt a momentary desire to resist; but what was the point? He guessed that this man was the executioner. The famous Frolov, the hangman of the Moscow prison whom they took around from city to city to perform executions. He was assisted by two others. First the arms were strapped to the bench, then the body, then the legs, so that it was impossible to move in any direction. Then all three went over to the second tumbril and began to strap Kibalchich, Mikhailov and Sonya to the bench. He saw all this quite clearly because he was sitting facing them. Hessia was not there; her execution had been postponed because of her pregnancy. He heard Sonya gasp as they were tightening the straps round her arms,

"You're hurting me!" And someone said, either the executioner or the gendarme officer standing nearby, "Never mind, it will hurt a lot more later." But all this barely touched the surface of his consciousness because he was eager to be out of the gates, eager to see the streets, the crowd, the faces, to meet their glances, hear their voices. His whole being was taut with this last, mad yearning. A placard with the word "regicide" was fastened to his chest. His heart began to pound. Faster, faster! He would see and understand. He needed no reward, no farewell of this earth: only people's eyes. At last the carts rolled, swaying heavily, out through the iron gates, the wheels creaked, there were troops on the move all around, and the sky was clearing. There was dampness in the air and the smell of spring; great piles of ice that had been chipped off the pavements.

The people gathered silently in ever larger crowds. There were many sleepy, morning faces, some were yawning, some stared with sullen curiosity, some shouted. Fists were waved.

Mikhailov in the second cart was trying to get up, to leap out of the straps—Andrei could see his powerful back straining—and he kept shouting something to the crowd. His words were drowned by the roll of drums. Suddenly Andrei saw a young woman perched on the pediment of a street lamp and clinging to the standard with one hand make a timid, welcoming gesture with the other. She was pulled down at once. He caught a glimpse of her face in the crowd, then it vanished. It looked as if she was being beaten. When they drove out into the square the sky became quite clear, a dazzling blue, and from the earth rose the smell of melting snow and puddles that had always gone to his head when he was a child.

Page 23 *Disraeli, Benjamin,* 1st Earl of Beaconsfield (1804-1881), British statesman and man of letters, called the "piccolo bestia" by Dostoyevsky in his *Writer's Diary* (1873; 1876-1877).

Page 26 *Count Tolstoy, Dmitry Andreyevich* (1823-1889) ultra-conservative Minister of Education (1866-1880) and simultaneously Procurator of the Holy Synod.

Page 32 *Nechayev affair.* In 1869, Nechayev, Sergei Gennadiyevich (1847-1882) founded the People's Vengeance society. His "Revolutionary's Catechism", based on the principle of the end justifies the means, proposed killing, defamation and blackmail for the sake of revolution. He followed this principle in his own activities (murder of the student Ivanov). In 1872, he was arrested in Switzerland, extradited at the request of the Russian Government and sentenced to twenty years' penal servitude. The term "Nechayevism" became symbolic of pseudo-revolution. Marx and Engels called it "a model of barrack-room communism".

Page 34 *Zemstvo,* organ of local government in the central provinces of tsarist Russia, largely representing the bourgeoisie and the nobility.

Page 35 *Balcan campaign,* reference to the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878.

Page 38 *Dragomanov, Mikhail Petrovich,* (1841-1895), Ukrainian historian and journalist of liberal sympathies.

Page 39 *Bakunin, Mikhail Aleksandrovich* (1814-1876), Russian revolutionary, ideologist of anarchism and Populism. An enemy of all statism. Though dedicated to revolution, he failed to understand its economic and political conditions. The rebellious trend in the revolutionary Narodnik (Populist) movement of the 1870s was directly fostered by his views, particularly his book *The State and Anarchy* (1873).

Page 42 *Land and Freedom* (Zemlya i Volya), secret revolutionary organisation led by A. Mikhailov, G. Plekhanov, S. Kravchinsky and others, set up in 1876. Its supporters founded permanent settlements in the rural areas, hoping to win the confidence of the peasantry and rouse them to revolution. The controversy on how the struggle was to be waged in future divided the organisation in 1879 into the Land-Sharers (Chorny Peredel), who held basically to the original programme of sharing out all the land among the peasants, and the People's Will (Narodnaya Volya), which chose individual terror as a means of struggle against the tsarist autocracy. The word "volya" in Russian has the dual meaning of "freedom" and "will".

Page 47 *Lavrov, Pyotr Lavrovich* (1823-1890), theoretician of the Russian revolutionary Narodnik movement (Populism); petty-bourgeois socialist, philosopher and sociologist, participated in the Paris Commune. The peak of Lavrov's revolutionary activity was his publication, while in emigration, of the magazine *Vperyod* (Forward), 1873-1877, which had a considerable influence on the outlook of the revolutionary youth of those days. In the early eighties he arrived at the idea of terrorism as the basic method of political struggle against autocracy.

Page 48 *Flerovsky,* pseudonym of Bervi, Vasily Vasilyevich (1829-1918), Russian advocate of democratic enlightenment, economist and sociologist.

Page 48 *Lassalle, Ferdinand* (1825-1864), a leader of the German working-class movement, journalist, advocate of opportunism and compromise in the working-class movement.

Page 48 *Tkachev, Pyotr Nikitich* (1844-1886), Russian literary critic and journalist, an ideologist of the Narodnik movement. During the 1870s published the magazine *Nabat* (Alarm) in Geneva.

Page 64 *Chaikovsky circle,* revolutionary Narodnik organisation in Russia in the 1870s. Its chief aim was to prepare the ground for a people's revolution by a combination of propaganda, agitation and organisation of the masses. It was named after one of the leaders of the society. Its activities were cut short by mass arrests of its members, most of whom were sentenced in the Trial of the 193.

Page 76 *Gogol's Khoma Brut,* reference to a character in Gogol's story *Viy.*

Page 135 *Plekhanov, Georgi (Georges) Valentinovich* (1856-1918), one of the leading Russian Marxists and founders of Russian Social-Democracy. In 1883, after breaking with the Narodnik movement, he organised in Geneva the first Russian Marxist circle, known as the Emancipation of Labour group. Plekhanov's works "Socialism and the Political Struggle" (1883), "Our Differences" (1885) and "To the Development of the Monistic View of History" (1895), played a big part in bringing the Russian revolutionary movement over from Narodnik theories to Marxism. From 1903 he began to depart from Marxism owing to his mistaken interpretation of the role of the working class in the new epoch and the role of the revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry, and became one of the leaders of the Menshevik (opportunist) trend in Russian Social-Democracy.

Page 168 *Shchedrin, N.,* pseudonym of the Russian satirist Mikhail Yevgrafovich Saltykov (1826-1889). Shchedrin formulated the basic idea of his works of the 1870s as follows: "I turned my attention to the family, property and the state and let it be understood that none of this actually exists nowadays."

Page 168 *Mikhailovsky, Nikolai Konstantinovich* (1842-1904), Russian publicist, literary critic, one of the theoreticians of liberal Populism, editor of the magazine *Otechestvenniye zapiski* (Notes of the Fatherland). While remaining on a legal status, he contributed to the publications of the People's Will under the pen-name of "Grognard".

Page 168 *Shelgunov, Nikolai Vasilyevich* (1824-1891), Russian publicist, critic, economist, active in the revolutionary-democratic movement.

Page 168 *Zaichnevsky, Pyotr Grigoryevich* (1842-1896), Russian revolutionary, founder of the "Jacobin" trend in the social movement at about the time of the abolition of serfdom. In 1861, he organised a circle that put out a number of illegal publications. He preached the ideas of utopian socialism, called on the peasants to practise civil disobedience, share the land and put it under communal ownership.

Page 191 *Prince Vasilchikov, Alexander Illarionovich* (1818-1881), Russian economist, supporter of the liberal landowner trend in the Zemstvo.

Page 193 *Herzen, Alexander Ivanovich* (1812-1870), Russian revolutionary democrat, materialist philosopher, and publicistic writer. Harassed by the tsarist government, he emigrated in 1847. Author of *The Past and My Thoughts* (1850s and 1860s), he founded in London the Free Russian Press, which printed the miscellanies *Polyarnaya Zvezda* (Polar Star), 1855-1867, and the newspaper *Kolokol* (The Bell), 1857-1867, which called for resistance to serfdom and the autocracy.

Page 193 *Ogarev, Nikolai Platonovich* (1813-1877), Russian thinker, publicist and poet, friend and associate of Herzen.

Page 195 *Loris-Melikov, Mikhail Tarielovich* (1825-1888), Count, called in to head the Supreme Administrative Commission in 1880. In August, became Minister of the Interior and was virtually dictator of Russia. He was retired in 1881, after the assassination of Alexander II.

Page 212 *Razin, Stepan Timofeyevich* (1630-1671), Don Cossack, leader in the Peasant War of 1670-1671.

Page 212 *Pugachev, Yemelyan Ivanovich* (1740, 1742 (?)-1775), leader in the Peasant War of 1773-1775.

Page 228 *Abaza, Alexander Ageyevich* (1821-1895), Russian statesman, advocate of moderate liberal reforms. As Chairman of the Department of State Economy of the Council of State and Minister of Finance he exercised a considerable influence on the government's economic policy.

Page 240 *Chernyshevsky, Nikolai Gavrilovich* (1828-1889), Russian revolutionary-democrat, materialist philosopher, critic, writer and leader of the revolutionary-democratic movement of the 1860s. Arrested in 1862, he wrote his novel *What Is to Be Done?* while imprisoned in the Peter and Paul Fortress. In 1864, he was exiled to Siberia, and returned only in 1883.

Page 255 *Milyutin, Dmitry Alekseyevich* (1816-1912), Russian soldier and statesman. As Minister of Military Affairs (1861-1881), instituted a number of bourgeois reforms in the armed forces. His political views were those of moderate liberalism.

Page 255 *The Berlin humiliation,* reference to the Congress of Berlin in 1878, called on the initiative of Britain and Austria-Hungary to re-

view the peace treaty of San Stefano that had concluded the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878. Under threat of renewed war, this time with Britain and Austria-Hungary, Russia was compelled to make concessions at its own expense and those of the Slav nations of the Balkan peninsula.

Page 257 *Anichkov Palace party,* name used for the most reactionary part of the Petersburg bureaucracy associated with the court and K. P. Pobedonostsev (1827-1907), procurator of the Holy Synod and tutor to Alexander, the heir to the throne. The Anichkov Palace was the residence of the Crown Prince.

Page 281 *Assembly of the Land,* gathering of the representatives of the ruling estates in 16th and 17th-century Russia, usually called by the tsar when he wished to confer with the nobility on matters of policy. It was abolished by Peter I.

Page 297 *Third Section,* short for "Third Section of His Majesty's Own Chancellery", a secret police organisation set up by Nicholas I in July 1826 after the Decembrist uprising. It had at its disposal the Corps of Gendarmes. In 1880, the Third Section was incorporated in the Department of Police.

Page 297 *Supreme Administrative Commission* for the preservation of state order and public peace was set up by Alexander II in February 1880 after the explosion in the Winter Palace. Its aim was to combat the revolutionary movement. It assumed control of the Third Section, the Corps of Gendarmes and other punitive bodies. Dissolved in August 1880.

Page 311 *Suvorin, Aleksei Sergeyevich* (1834-1912), Russian journalist and publisher. After beginning as a liberal journalist in the 1850s, in 1876 began publishing *Novoye Vremya* (New Times), a mouthpiece of reactionary court and bureaucratic circles.

Page 380 *League of the Russian People,* set up in October 1905 to fight the revolution. It was made up of reactionary representatives of the urban petty bourgeoisie, landowners, kulaks and déclassé elements.

Page 402 Verses written by Nikolai Nekrasov (1821-1877).

Page 412 *Decembrists,* revolutionary noblemen, the first to raise an armed uprising against the tsarist autocracy, which took place in December 1825. Hence their name.

Page 412 *Rakhmetov,* one of the main characters in Chernyshevsky's novel *What Is to Be Done?* (1863).

Page 425 *Uspensky, Gleb Ivanovich* (1843-1902), Russian writer and revolutionary-democrat.

APPENDIX

Adlerberg, Count, Alexander Vladimirovich (1818-1888), General-Adjutant, Minister of the Court.

"Alchemist", see Hartmann.

Aleksandrovsk, (now Zaporozhye), market town on the River Dnieper, Ukraine, scene of first attempt to derail tsar's train.

Alexis Ravelin, outer section of the Peter and Paul Fortress used as a prison for political offenders.

"Alyosha Popovich", see Kostyurin.

Barannikov, Alexander Ivanovich, "Semyon" (1858-1884), prominent member of People's Will, married to Maria Nikolayevna Olovennikova.

Biyuk-Sarai, summer residence of Princess Dolgorukaya on Crimean coast.

Bogdanovich, Yuri Nikolayevich, "Kobozev", (1849-1888), member of Chaikovsky circle and Executive Committee of People's Will, proprietor of cheese shop for mining of Malaya Sadovaya Street.

"Boris", see Zhelyabov.

Bratslav, market town in the Ukraine, near Polish border.

Cheremisov, merchant *see* Zhelyabov.

Debogory-Mokriyevich, Vladimir Karpovich (1848-1926), involved in Chigirin affair and escape of Stefanovich and others from prison. Sentenced to hard labour but escaped and went abroad.

Degayev, Sergei, ex-artillery officer, member of People's Will.

Deutsch, Lev Grigoriyevich, associated with Debogory-Mokriyevich in Chigirin affair, afterwards supported the Land-Sharers, emigrated.

Dolgorukova, Anya, "Nina", wife of Stepan Shirayev.

Dolgorukaya, Yekaterina, Katya, mistress of the tsar. On the death of the Empress in 1880 he married her.

Drenteln, General Mezentsev's successor as head of the Third Section.

"Elder" see Tellalov.

Feodosia, Black Sea port and centre of Feodosia Uyezd, eastern Crimea.

Figner, Vera Nikolayevna (Filippova), Verochka (1852-1942), one of the leaders of the People's Will movement.

Figner, Yevgenia Nikolayevna, Zhenya (1858-?), member of People's Will.

Fontanka, small river in St. Petersburg, flows parallel with the Moika River into the Neva.

Franzholi, Andrei, Odessa associate of Zhelyabov's, member of People's Will.

Frolenko, Mikhail, "Mikhailo" (1849-?), participant in numerous People's Will schemes, arrested 1881, released 1905.

Frolov, Gavrila Timofeyevich, Zhelyabov's grandfather on his mother's side. His grandmother was Akulina Timofeyevna. Also living at the Kashka-Chekrak estate were his Auntie Lyuba and Uncle Vasily, stableman to Lorentsov, the landowner.

"Glazov" see Rysakov.

Goldenberg, Grigory Davidovich, Grishka, aliases David, Beaconsfield, Fyodor (1856-1880).

Gorinovich, police spy whom revolutionaries attempted, unsuccessfully, to execute in Odessa.

Gorodishche, estate belonging to Yakhnenko, Zhelyabov's father-in-law.

Grachevsky, Mikhail Fyodorovich (1849-1887), member of Executive Committee of People's Will.

Grinevitsky, Ignaty Ioakimovich, "Pussy" (1856-1881), the bomb-thrower whose bomb killed Alexander II.

Gurko, Governor-General of St. Petersburg.

Hartmann, Lev Nikolayevich, "Alchemist" (1850-1913), member of Executive Committee of People's Will.

Helfman Hessia (1855-1882), in charge of flat in Telezhnaya Street with Sablin.

Isayev, Grigory Prokofyevich, Grisha (1857-1884), member of the Executive Committee, People's Will.

Ivanova, Sofya Andreyevna, Sonya, "Vanka" (1857-1927), in charge of Sapyornaya printing press.

"Janitor", see Mikhailov.

Kara, north Russian river flowing into Kara Sea, freezes October, thaws June.

Karakozov, Dmitry Vladimirovich, "Mitya" (1840-1866), first to shoot at Alexander II, 1866. Executed in the same year.

Kashka-Chekrak, estate owned by Lorentsov where Zhelyabov's grandfather and family lived.

Khalturin, Stepan Nikolayevich (1857-1882), member of the Executive Committee, People's Will, responsible for explosion in Winter Palace, February 1880.

Kibalchich, Nikolai Ivanovich, "Agacheskulov", "Technician" (1853-1881), member of Executive Committee of People's Will, explosives expert.

Kirillov, Grigory Grigoriyevich, Gospodin Kirillov, head of secret department, Third Section.

Kletochnikov, Nikolai Vasilyevich (1848-1883), under direction of Alexander Mikhailov penetrated the Third Section as agent of People's Will.

Knop, Colonel, first investigator of Zhelyabov's activities in Odessa.

"Kobozev", see Bogdanovich.

Kolodkevich, Nikolai Nikolayevich, the "Purring Cat" (1851-1884), member of Executive Committee of People's Will.

Konstantin Nikolayevich, Grand Duke, brother of Alexander II.

Korba, Anna Pavlovna, Anya, (1849-1930), member of Executive Committee of People's Will.

Kostyurin, "Alyosha Popovich", Kiev rebel, tried in the Trial of the 193.

Kovalsky, Ivan, Odessa revolutionary, operated secret printing press, advocate of armed resistance but not terrorism.

Kravchinsky, Sergei Mikhailovich (1851-1895), member of Chaikovsky circle and People's Will, took part in assassination of Mezentsev, emigrated.

Kronstadt, fortress and docks on Kotlin Island built by Peter I to protect approaches to St. Petersburg. Later a naval base.

Kropotkin, Prince Dmitry, Governor-General of Kharkov, killed by Goldenberg.

Kutuzova, Anna Petrovna, Kletochnikov's landlady.

Kvyatkovsky, Alexander Aleksandrovich, "Alexander I" (1853-1880), member of Executive Committee.

Langans, Martin Rudolfovich (1853-1887), of Prussian extraction. Member of Executive Committee of People's Will, took part in attempt of March 1st, 1881.

Lipetsk, town south-east of Moscow, founded by Peter I in 1703 as iron-working centre. Scene of secret congress of some members of the Land and Freedom movement, June 1879, prior to Voronezh Congress.

Livadia, resort on Crimean coast about two miles from Yalta.

Lizogub, Dmitry Andreyevich (1850-1879), wealthy landowner, member of Land and Freedom party, devoted his whole fortune to the cause.

Makarevich (née Rosenstein), Anna, Anya, married to Petro, active revolutionary in Russia and abroad.

Makarevich, Petro, leader of a group engaged in smuggling illegal literature into Russia. Arrested and charged in the Big Trial, 1877.

Maria Nikolayevna, see Olovennikova.

Merkulov, Vasily Apollonovich, Vaska (1861-1905), member of People's Will.

Mezentsev, General (1827-1878), chief of Third Section, assassinated by Kravchinsky.

Mikhailov, Adrian Fyodorovich (1853-1929), member of Chaikovsky circle and People's Will, helped Kravchinsky in assassination of Mezentsev, driver of Varvar, the escape horse.

Mikhailov, Alexander Dmitriyevich (1855-1884), Alexander, Sasha, the "Janitor", "Pyotr Ivanovich", leading organiser of People's Will.

Mikhailov, Timofei Mikhailovich (1859-1881), worker, member of People's Will, participated in attack of March 1st.

Mikhailovsky Palace, residence of Grand Duke Konstantin and Princess Yekaterina Mikhailovna in St. Petersburg.

Mir, type of agricultural or urban commune with an elected *starosta* ("elder").

Mirsky, Leon, shot at General Drenteln, Mezentsev's successor as head of the Third Section. Arrested and imprisoned in Alexis Ravelin.

Mitya, see Karakozov.

Moika, small river in Petersburg flowing into the Neva.

Morozov, Nikolai Aleksandrovich, "Sparrow" (1854-1946), writer for People's Will publications and member of Executive Committee.

Myshkin, Ippolit Nikitich (1848-1885), active revolutionary, attempted to rescue Chernyshevsky in 1875 and became leading figure in the Big Trial. Sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment which was afterwards increased.

Novorossiisky University, at Odessa, not at Novorossiisk on the Caucasian coast.

Olovennikova, Maria Nikolayevna (Oshanina), 1850-1897, member of Executive Committee of People's Will.

Olovennikova, Natalya Nikolayevna (1856-1924), sister of Maria, member of Perovskaya's scouting party.

Osinsky, Valerian Andreyevich (1853-1879), active in the south, organised escape of Stefanovich and Deutsch.

Perovskaya, Sofya Lvovna, Sonya, Sonechka (1854-1881), aliases Sukhorukova, Prokhorovskaya, Voinova, member of Chaikovsky circle and Executive Committee of People's Will, father was Governor-General of St. Petersburg until 1866.

Peter and Paul Fortress, first building constructed in Petersburg, 1703, to

protect the city and lands along the River Neva. Soon became a prison for political offenders.

Plehve, Count, public prosecutor, Petersburg.

Poltora-Dmitry, bailiff at Kashka-Chekrak estate.

Presnyakov, Andrei Korneyevich (1856-1880), member of Executive Committee of People's Will.

"Pussy", see Grinevitsky.

"Pyotr Ivanovich", see Mikhailov.

Rysakov, Nikolai Ivanovich, "Glazov" (1862-1881), joined the People's Will and was soon involved in the attack of March 1st as a bomb-thrower.

Sablin, Nikolai Alekseyevich, "Prokhorovsky", (1854-1881), member of People's Will in charge of conspiratorial flat in Telezhnaya Street.

Saratov, city and province on the Volga. The settlement here was typical of many set up by the young people of the Narodnik movement for "going among the people".

Simferopol, central Crimea, terminus of the main line from Petersburg and Moscow.

Sitsyanko, Alexander, Sasha, son of Dr. Sitsyanko of Kharkov.

Solovyov, Alexander Konstantinovich (1846-1879). Executed after unsuccessful attempt on the life of Alexander II.

"Sparrow", see Morozov.

Stefanovich, Yakov Vasilyevich (1854-?), Kiev rebel, organiser of Chigirin affair.

Strakhov, Nikolai Nikolayevich (1828-1896), journalist, critic and philosopher, associated with Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy.

Sukhanov, Nikolai Yevgeniyevich (1853-1882), naval officer, supporter of People's Will and organiser of its fighting service.

Sukhorukova, Maria Semyonovna, see Perovskaya.

"Taras", see Zhelyabov.

Tellalov, Pyotr Abramovich, Abramych, the "Elder", (1853-1885), leader of Kharkov revolutionaries.

Terentyeva, Lila Lilochka, active in the Crimea (robbery of Kherson treasury), partnered Kibalchich in conspiratorial flat for March 1st attack.

Teterka, Makar Vasilyevich, worker, from poor Cossack family, assisted in Stone Bridge attempt.

"Tigrych", see Tikhomirov.

Tikhomirov, Lev Aleksandrovich, "Tigrych", "Old Man" (1850-1922),

member of Chaikovsky circle and Executive Committee of People's Will, emigrated 1882.

Tolstaya, Sofya Andreyevna, (1844-1919), wife of Leo Tolstoy.

Trigoni, Mikhail Nikolayevich, Misha (1860-1917), friend of Zhelyabov at school and University. Member of Executive Committee of People's Will.

Tyrkov, Arkady Vladimirovich, Arkasha (1860-1925), member of the scouting party for March 1st attack.

Valerian, see Osinsky.

Volkhovsky, Felix, founder of Volkhovsky circle in Odessa, to which Zhelyabov was attracted.

Voronezh, city south-east of Moscow, in 1879 scene of congress of Land and Freedom party two months after the secret Lipetsk Congress of the terrorist faction.

Yakhnenko, Semyon Stepanovich, factory owner, city councillor, father-in-law of Zhelyabov; Olga and Tasya were his daughters.

Yakimova, Anna Vasilyevna, "Baska", 1856-1942 (?), worked with Zhelyabov as Madam Cheremisova at Aleksandrovsk and with Bogdanovich as Kobozeva in the "cheese shop", where the Malaya Sadovaya mine was being laid. Arrested 1881 and like most of her associates who were not executed remained in prison till 1905, the year of the first Russian revolution.

Yemelyanov, Ivan Panteleimonovich, "Sugub" (1861-1916), bomb-thrower in the March 1st attack.

Yuryevskaya, Princess, *see* Dolgorukaya.

"Zakhar", see Zhelyabov.

Zasulich, Vera Ivanovna (1852-1919), shot Trepov, the Governor of Petersburg, 1877, after he had ordered the flogging of the student Bogolyubov. Member of Land-Sharers, associated later with Plekhanov.

Zhelyabov, Andrei Ivanovich, aliases Taras, Boris, Ivanych, Cheremisov, nobleman Slatvinsky, etc. (1850-1881), one of the leaders of People's Will.

Zundelevich, Aron Isakovich, Zund (1855-1923), member of Executive Committee of People's Will.

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